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THE
A P O L O G Y
O F
THEOPHILUS LINDSEY, M. A.
ON RESIGNING THE
VICARAGE OF CATTERICK, YORKSHIRE.
THE SECOND EDITION.

L O N D O N :

Printed for J. JOHNSON, No. 72, in St. Paul's
Church Yard. 1774.



T H E

P R E F A C E:

TOO large a circuit may seem to have been taken in this work, and some things introduced appear foreign and unfuitable, if it be not considered, that the design hath not been barely to offer a vindication of the motives, conduct, and sentiments of a private person upon the subject of it, however important to him.

The aim has been higher, whether attained or no: to promote that *charity*, without which *a faith that can remove mountains* (1 Cor. xiii 2.) *is nothing*; and to excite some to piety, virtue, and integrity: in which it will be accounted far happier to have succeeded, than in making the largest number of proselytes to any opinions.

A sentiment not unlike to this, has often been read with pleasure, in that fine writer, teacher and example of virtue and true religion, Lactantius; a confessor for the truth in the worst (the *Diocletian*) times, and unchanged,

unchanged, humble, and moderate in the most flourishing, when made tutor to Crispus, the emperor Constantine's son : He thus concludes one of his first christian writings.

“ But if life be an object of desire to a wise man ; truly I could wish to live for no other end, but to do something worthy of life ; and which may enable the Reader, not to be more learned and eloquent, to which I can form but little pretensions, but to be a good man, which is the chief thing of all. And this, if I can but accomplish, I shall think I have lived long enough, and fulfilled my duty as a man, if by
any

any labours of mine, some few may be delivered from error, and directed in their road to heaven.” *

* Quod si vita est optanda sapienti ; profecto nullam aliam ob causam vivere optaverim, quam ut aliquid efficiam quod vita dignum sit, et quod utilitatem legentibus, etsi non ad eloquentiam, quia tenuis in nobis facundiæ rivus est, ad vivendum tamen afferat, quod est maxime necessarium. Quo perfecto, satis me vixisse arbitror, et officium hominis implèsse, si labor meus aliquos homines ab erroribus liberatos, ad iter cœlestē direxerit.

LACTANTIUS—de opificio Dei, p. 496.

Just Published, Price Six-pence,

A FAREWELL ADDRESS to the PARISHIONERS of CATTERICK. By THEOPHILUS LINDSEY, M. A.

Printed for J. JOHNSON, No. 72, St. Paul's Church-yard.

C O N-

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CHAPTER I.

THE INTRODUCTION, WITH SOME STRICTURES ON
THE ORIGIN OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY,
AND THE OPPOSITION IT MET WITH TO THE
TIME OF THE REFORMATION.

IT would be doing an injury to the petitioners to parliament for redress in the matter of subscription, with whom the writer was from the first connected, to class them as holding the same opinions with him, if there should be any thing to blame in the freedom with which he hath delivered his sentiments on some favourite points. The rise of his scruples and difficulties was many years prior to that connexion, and would, he is persuaded, have brought him to take the step he has been constrained to for his own quiet, without it. Whilst at the same time he must ever think the design and conduct of that association, unsuccessful in its main point as it hath hitherto been, highly serviceable to true religion, and honourable to all concerned in it; and cannot but reflect with peculiar satisfaction, that he did not quit his ministry in the church established,

B

blished, till the most reasonable attempts for a farther reformation were rejected ; first, in the honourable the Commons house of parliament refusing the petition of the clergy, and the two professions of law and physic ; and next, in the abrupt negative put by the governors of the church upon the application made to them by Mr. Wollaston and his associates, viz. *that in their opinion it was * neither prudent nor safe to do any thing in the matter by them submitted to their consideration* ; the very words (as communicated by a friend) of the A——p of C——y, to the

* “ It may therefore be dangerous to begin with making alterations and amendments in the church, lest those scaffoldings, which are erected for repairs, should be made use of to pull down the whole fabric.”

“ Ans. As to the Christian religion in general, we have the sure word of prophecy, that *the gates of hell shall not prevail against it*. And as to particular establishments, I should apprehend, that the freer they were from errors, the more likely they would be to stand. *At least I should think it would be right to run some risque, and place some trust in the providence of God, rather than let errors of any consequence remain.*—Dr. Clayton, bishop of Clogher, of *panagyrus*, dedication to essay on spirit, p. xlv. xlvi.

previous message and deputation sent to him from Tennison's library.

The clergy-society at the *Feathers* was made up, as the like voluntary combinations of serious and inquisitive persons unknown to each other ever will be made up, of men differing in opinion from each other in many respects, but united in this, that subscription to human formularies of faith was an unjust imposition upon the consciences of men, and an invasion of Christ's authority, the only lord of conscience, and head of his church.

As a body of men, they are no more chargeable with the private opinions than with the private conduct of each individual of their number. Some of them, without any just impeachment of their integrity, may think nothing amiss in repeating that subscription, of which they sought the removal. Others may not be able to allow themselves such a latitude. And it may be painful, and even impossible to some to reconcile their minds any longer to continue those ministrations in the church, to which their subscription and declarations bind them, when admitted to a cure of souls.

By a long train and series of thought and events, I have found myself unfortunately of this latter number, and after much balancing in my own mind, have believed it incumbent on me to make this apology for myself, who never thought of troubling the public with any thing of mine : willing, at the same time I must own, when thus called to it, and even glad, at whatever cost, to bear my feeble testimony to the honour and true worship of the *One God* and Father of all, obscured or oppressed by high authority or dark superstition; in almost every Christian country ; and thereby to leave, with my friends at least, a reasonable justification of my conduct for quitting an advantageous situation in the church, of some probable usefulness to others, and casting myself on the providence of God.

It may be some recommendation, if not of the truth of what is delivered, yet of the diligence and sincerity of the writer, that they are not notions taken up of yesterday, but the result of many years painful and solicitous enquiry, not without frequent and earnest aspirations to the

Father

Father of Light; for direction and assistance; and to which the prejudices of education and the suggestions of worldly ease and interest were most opposed.

And as he hath been fearful of committing any mistakes himself, he hath been no less desirous not to mislead others, in what he here presumes to lay before the public.

Firmly persuaded, upon such evidence as he thinks no fair mind can resist, that the Lord Jesus came from God, in the writing of these sheets he hath been all along under the most serious impressions of the relation he bears, and the obligations he owes to this divinely commissioned Saviour, *who loved him* (Galat. ii. 20.) *and gave himself for him*; the appointed judge of quick and dead, by whom his future lot is to be decided, and who hath given his faithful followers hope, after death, of “*beholding his glory, and being for ever with him*” * John xvii. 24. I Thessal. iv. 17.

But

* John xvii. 24. “Father *I will*, that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am.” But it ought rather to be translated, Father, *I desire*, ---as the phrase, *I will*, in our language, is ambiguous,

But he dares not advance this divine Saviour to an equality* with his God and heavenly Father, who himself came to teach men, that the Father was the only true God; and whose highest aim, glory and felicity was, to be the beloved son and chosen messenger of the Father, and to be employed by him in teaching his will to men. John xvii. 3.—“ This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom

ous, and not clearly that of a *supplicant*. The French translations have it *Je désire*; *Je soubaite*.

* When Dr. James, the divinity professor at Cambridge, treated our Saviour's name with too much levity in drolling upon Mr. Whiston's and Dr. Clarke's supposed error about the Trinity, at the disputation of the latter for his degree of doctor in divinity; the famous Dr. Bentley made the following extempore tetra-
stich on the professor :

Tú ne mathematicum, male false Jacobe, laceffis,
Histrion dum ringis serium habere virum ?
Ludis tu Christum, *Dominumque Deumque* professus :
Ille colit *Dominum*, quem negat esse *Deum*.

ENGLISHED.

And dost thou, *James*, with aukward keenness mark
Whiston, and scoffing fret at serious *Clarke* ?

Thou jest'st on Christ, thy Lord and God supreme ;
Whiston adores him *Lord* ; but fears him *God* to name.

Whiston's hist. mem. of Dr. S. Clarke, p. 14.

thou hast sent"* , or Jesus Christ thy messenger, thine apostle. And iv. 24. "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work."

When the malicious Jews, perverting his words, calumniated him, John v. 18. for *making himself equal with God*; and, in like sort, x. 33, were going to stone him for *blasphemy*, because that he, being *a man*, *made himself God*, by which *making himself God, and equal with God*, they meant nothing more than his assuming a divine power and authority without any warrant for it, as the context and his answer to them plainly sheweth : his defence of himself at both times was—not, that he was indeed *equal to God*, or that he *was God*, but that he had his authority from the Father; v. 19, the son *can do nothing of himself*, but what he seeth the Father do; and x. 37, If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not; referring them to the works he did, as a proof of the ma-

* Grotius's note on the text is happily expressed, "De se modeste in tertia persona loquitur. Sensus est. Et ut me agnoscant ut legatum tuum. Hac voce ostendit honorem sibi habitum ad patrem redire. Nam regis interest, ut legatus honoretur."

liciousness of their accusation, and of his power and authority from God.

If he said, John v. 22, 23, “ The Father judgeth no man ; but hath committed all judgment unto the son : That all men should honour the son even as they honour the Father.” He immediately explaineth what that honour is which he thus claimeth, v. 23, latter part : “ He that honoureth not the son, honoureth not the Father, *which hath sent him :*” i. e. the honour to be paid to him was not so much on his own account, as out of respect to God, *who had sent him*, and the important office which he had committed to him *.

John vi. 57. He declares that he received life and being from the Father ; — “ As the living Father hath sent me,

* This is Origen’s interpretation of this passage, and the idea he had of the ground of the honour to be paid to Christ. For after asserting that the heathens can shew *no authority* from the God over all to worship their gods, dæmons, and heroes—he says, “ If Celsus in his turn should ask us concerning Jesus, we shall demonstrate that the honour we pay to him is *appointed* by God, namely, that *all men should honour the Son as they honour the Father.*”

Origen contr. Cels. l. viii. p. 384.

“ and

“ and I live by the Father”——See Dr. Clarke’s paraphrase.

vii. 16, “ My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.”

viii. 28, 29. “ Then said Jesus unto them, when ye have lifted up the son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself ; but as the Father hath taught me, I speak these things ; and he that sent me is with me ; the Father hath not left me alone : for I do always those things that please him.”

See farther our Lord’s declarations concerning himself, recorded by this his beloved disciple, John ix. 4. x. 17, 18, 24—30. xi. 40—42. xii. 49. xiii. 16, 20. xiv. 1, 16, 28, 31. xv. 8, 10. xvi. 5, 23. xvii. throughout ; in all which he formally professes his inferiority and dependance, that he received his being and all his powers from God ; and leads men by his precepts and example, to look up to God the Father, as the sole author and source of all blessings to all, and the sole object of supreme adoration from all.

Trinity, an
unscriptural
name.

Whatever difficulties there may be in the bible in other respects, one would imagine there could be no dispute concerning the object of divine worship, whether one or many; compounded of more persons than one, or uncompounded. The most unlearned reader sees at once, (unless told he must not see it,) that the God that made him, and whom he is to adore, is one, without multiplicity or division, even as he knoweth himself to be one being, one person, and not many. Learned Christians have indeed coined a new language of their own quite unknown to our Lord and his apostles, and have called God *Trinity, a Trinity in Unity that is to be worshipped*; which is obviously departing from the simplicity of the gospel, and is at best making a plain thing obscure. For those persons, however, who reckoned these to be proper expressions of what appeared to them the scripture doctrine concerning the deity, there could be nothing blameable in their thus wording and explaining it for themselves. They had a right to do it, which no one should or ought to interfere with or hinder. But the unhappiness hath
been,

been, that some men have not been contented with making and adopting this phraseology concerning the deity for themselves, but have also obtruded it upon others, by methods not always the most justifiable, as the only right and allowable way of thinking and speaking concerning God. And this obscure language, consecrated at first by a few leading names, and grown hoary, as it were, thro' length of years, takes place of, and with many is revered above that of holy scripture itself; and the doctrine thus worded is called a *tremendous doctrine*, a *sacred mystery*; and, for many ages, Christians have been forbidden to search into it, or call it in question, under various pains and penalties, even unto death; and at this very day, to disapprove this unscriptural language and the doctrine conveyed by it, shall by some be looked upon as denying the truth of divine revelation, as little short of atheism itself*.

The

* “ The Complainants, if we may judge from some publications previous to this attempt, are a motley mixture of *Infidel's* of various denominations, such as *Deists*, *Arians*, *Socinians*, and *Pelagians*; the grand point they want to be rid of, is the doctrine of the *Trinity in Unity*,

The rise and date of the name *Trinity*.

The word *Trinity* was not known or used amongst Christians for near two hundred years after Christ, when it was first used by The-

ty, and its consequences, such as *the godhead of Christ*, and the *personality and godhead of the Holy Ghost*; if these could be struck out of the liturgy and articles, they would be content. Dr. Clarke's *Being*, Mahomet's *Alla*—any but the true God will serve their turn.”——*Scriptural Comment on the xxxix Articles*—preface, page ix. x. by M. Madan, A. B. &c. 1772.

“——This is the principal, if not the only characteristic note, whereby to distinguish a Christian from another man; yea, from a Turk; for this is the chief thing that the Turks, both in their alcoran, and other writings, upbraid Christians for, even because they believe a *Trinity of persons in the divine nature*. For which cause they frequently say, they are *people that believe God hath companions*; so that take away this article of our Christian faith, and what depends upon it, and there would be but little difference betwixt a Christian and a Turk.”——*Bishop Beveridge. Private thoughts*, part ii. page 53.

One is sorry to see this pious bishop laying such unwarrantable stress on his own *private* opinions in this and other points, and dealing out such uncharitable censures in a book of practical piety; unfit place for it surely of all others! Much is to be allowed undoubtedly to the warmth of his natural temper. But then he should be read with caution, lest we receive harm from him instead of benefit, and in settling our orthodoxy lose our charity.

ophilus,

ophilus, a gentile convert, bishop of Antioch; but in no great conformity to what it is made to signify at present. —It is acknowledged to be entirely of heathen extraction, borrowed from Plato, and the Platonic philosophy: and this being its true origin, it should seem, that a proper zeal for God's word, and regard for Christ and his inspired apostles, should make us relax a little of our passion and vehemence against those who scruple to use a language not sanctified by their authority, in speaking of and addressing the great God.

Luther and Calvin, (as a learned author* informs us) in some moments, were little disposed to favour this unscriptural dialect. “The word *Trinity* sounds oddly, saith the former, and is a human invention. It were better to call almighty God, God, than *Trinity*.” “And Calvin says, I like not this prayer, O holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity: it favours of barbarism.—The word *Trinity* is barbarous, insipid, profane; a human invention; grounded on no testimony of God's word; the po-

* Ben Mordecai, letter i. page 75.

pish God, unknown to the prophets and apostles *."

We bear with this freedom of speech in these eminent reformers, because they were well-known and warm contenders for what is called *the doctrine* of the Trinity, tho' they expressed such utter distaste and dislike of *the word* itself. It would be but fair and equitable to give a patient hearing to those, who do not take upon them to condemn this obnoxious language in so rude a way, but who think there is cause and ground from holy scripture to discard not only *the name*, but *the doctrine* itself; who assert the divine Unity in the strictest and most absolute sense; that God is One, and his name One, the God that made the world, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; and that He alone is the supreme object of his creatures religious regards and worship, by the testimony of Jesus himself.

* " Imo Calvinus non dubitavit dicere, " cette priere reçue communement, *sainte Trinité, un seul Dieu, aye pitié de nous*, ne me plaist point, et sent du tout sa barbarie;" in Epist. ad Polon. secund. Gall. cam epistolarum ejus editionem."——Curcellæi Op. page 833.

The bulk of Christians have suffered themselves to be strangely deluded into a notion that there is a merit in believing dark, inexplicable doctrines *, and that it

is

* I beg leave to give a sample at length of one of these dark doctrines, to shew what *hay and stubble* (1 Cor. iii. 12.) some that are supposed master-builders present us with, to build us up in our most holy faith :

“ We are now to consider the order of those persons in the Trinity, described in the words before us, Matth. xxviii. 19. First, the Father, and then the Son, and then the Holy Ghost ; every one of which is really and truly God ; and yet they are all but one real and true God. A mystery, which we are all bound to believe, but yet must have a great care how we speak of it ; it being both easy and dangerous to mistake in expressing so mysterious a truth as this is. If we think of it, how hard is it to contemplate upon one numerically Divine nature in more than one and the same Divine person ? or, upon Three Divine persons in no more than One and the same Divine nature ? If we speak of it, how hard is it to find out words to express it ? If, I say, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be three, and every one distinctly God, it is true : but if I say, they be three, and every one a distinct God, it is false. I may say, the Divine persons are distinct in the Divine nature ; but I cannot say, that the Divine nature is divided into the Divine persons. I may say,

say,

is owing to want of a proper humility that others will not submit their understandings to receive them. Nevertheless our Saviour Christ teaches no mysterious doctrines, nor commends any faith but that which

say, God the Father is One God, and the Son is One God, and the Holy Ghost is One God; but I cannot say, that the Father is one God, and the Son another God, and the Holy Ghost a third God. I may say, the Father begat another who is God; yet I cannot say, that he begat another God. And from the Father and the Son proceedeth another who is God; yet I cannot say, from the Father and the Son proceedeth another God. For all this while, though their Nature be the same, their Persons are distinct; and though their Persons be distinct, yet still their Nature is the same. So that, though the Father be the first person in the Godhead, the Son the second, the Holy Ghost the third; yet the Father is not the first, the Son a second, the Holy Ghost a third God. So hard a thing is it to word so great a mystery aright; or to fit, so high a truth with expressions suitable and proper to it, without going one way or another from it."——

Bp. Beveridge. Private thoughts, part ii. pag. 48, 49.

When we read such puzzling unintelligible mystery, and see such mighty stress laid on it, how thankful ought we to be for the good sense and simplicity of the gospel of Jesus, which leads us by no such dark and intricate roads to heaven; but as one of his chief apostles speaketh, Acts xx. 21. requireth no more of all men but *repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ!*

imme-

immediately influences the heart and practice. “ But (to use the words of an author of good account) this pretence of a necessity of humbling the understanding is none of the meanest arts, whereby some persons have invaded and usurped a power over other men’s faith and consciences. But he that submitteth his understanding to all that he knows God hath said, and is ready to submit to all that he hath said if he but know it, denying his own affections, and ends, and interests, and human persuasions, laying them all down at the feet of his great master Jesus Christ, that man hath brought his understanding into subjection, and every proud thought into the obedience of Christ, and this is the *ὑπακοὴ πίστεως*, the obedience of faith, which is the duty of a Christian.”

—*Taylor, Liberty of prophesying*, p. 30.

The first Christians saw so far into this great truth, that piety, benevolence and integrity, are the end of the divine commandment, and of all the various communications of light and knowledge to men, that they readily admitted their virtuous heathen progenitors into the Christians’ heaven, to

be saved by Christ, though they never heard of his name, as thinking, and thinking rightly, that the grace and mercy of the kind parent of the universe, revealed by Jesus Christ, would be extended to all those in all times, who had diligently improved, and walked according to the measure of light afforded to them.

“Think not, saith Irenæus, that Christ came for those only who believed on him in the time of Tiberius, or that the Father hath made this merciful provision only for the men that now are: It is for all men whatsoever, who have lived from the beginning, and according to their power, have feared and served God in their generation, and acted righteously and charitably towards their neighbours, and have desired to see Christ and hear his voice.” lib. iv. cap. xxxix.

“They that have formerly lived, (and they that now live) agreeably to reason, are Christians, and in a secure and quiet state.” Justin. Martyr. Ap. i. p. 83.

“Therefore before the coming of Christ, philosophy was that which was necessary for salvation to the Greeks”—and then again—“it was their schoolmaster to Christ,

as the law was to the Jews." Clem. Alexand. Stro. i. vi.

And Origen, on Romans ii. 10, 11, 12. "This is spoken of the Gentiles, who *having no law are a law unto themselves*, who shall not lose the reward of their good deeds, in being just and chaste, and governing themselves with prudence, temperance, and humility." Vid. Whitby. Diff. sacr. p. 232.

But as Christians multiplied, and increased in power and wealth, their charity towards those who dissented from them grew less, in relation both to this world and the next; and the mansions of bliss would be thinly peopled, if their anathemas and proscriptions of their fellow-creatures were to be ratified there.

Hence that vulgar unhappy error, which is infused into us from our very cradle, by which we are nursed up in the contempt and almost abhorrence of every sect of Christians, but the one in which we ourselves had the good hap to be born; so that they whose minds become afterwards more enlarged, can seldom so entirely shake off this prejudice, but the leaven of it will cling to them. Whereas it should be a first and perpetual lesson, to esteem the

virtuous and the good alike of every persuasion, and never to think disrespectfully of those who worship their Maker in a way different from ourselves: nay, we should be principled in it, for it is the very doctrine of Christ our Master, not to judge or condemn any that are upright and sincere, but to think as favourably of their future state and condition as of our own, however remote their opinions may be from ours, in points that we deem most essential. For if they be equally sincere in seeking the truth, and living up to it, they will be equally accepted with God; and of their sincerity he alone is the Judge, and not we.

At the first planting of the gospel, ere yet all the apostles of our Lord were gone to their rest, many strange errors and doctrines sprung up amongst some of their followers. But in a very few years after, such extravagant systems concerning God and the invisible world were grafted on the simple truths they had taught, that the wildest mystics of later times have produced nothing more frantic and absurd.

Irenæus, of whose work we have little more than an old Latin translation remaining, hath written as large against these *heresies*, as he calls them; and by his labours, and those of others, their contradiction to the scripture, and absurdity was so fully exposed, that men grew ashamed of them, and they died away of themselves.

But it was an evil hour afterwards, that the term *heresy* became particularly affixed to such opinions as were not in agreement with the doctrine of the *Trinity*, and those called *heretics* who opposed that doctrine. For the name being already of bad sound, on account of the monstrous tenets of those men to whom it was first given, though in itself of indifferent signification, and invidious insinuations being then thrown out, as sometimes now, that they who rejected the received Creeds, sought to degrade Christ from his real dignity, the passions of the ignorant multitude were wound up to the highest pitch against those that were so branded. But whoever reads the annals of ecclesiastical history with an impartial eye, and will not suffer himself to be governed by names

Disbelief of
the Trinity
no blame-
able heresy.

and sounds, will soon perceive, that from the days of Constantine to the present times, those called *heretics* by their adversaries, have generally been the honest few, who have ventured to search the holy scriptures for themselves, and openly to profess the truth of God which they there learned, in opposition to popular error.

We readily allow this definition to be the true one, and glory in the name of *heretic*, as an honourable distinction, when given us by the Papists, as from time immemorial they have given it to all that oppose the Roman Chief and Bishop, and to this day never afford us Protestants any other appellation. Let us not use two different measures: let us put the same favourable construction upon a conscientious dissent from the doctrine of the Trinity, or whatever has had the good fortune to be espoused by the majority and counted orthodox, in former times, or in our own, and then we shall abandon the name of *heretic* intirely, as most unjustly fixed upon those who differ from others on such just grounds; or else, if we will continue to use it, it will cease to be a name of reproach,

proach, and become honourable to the wearer, as it was to the apostle Paul, Acts xxiv. 14. “ I confess unto thee” (saith he, in his defence before the Roman governor) “ that after the way which they “ call *heresy*, so worship I the God of my “ Fathers.”

• A very general persuasion hath Christians, for some ages after Christ, were wholly Anti-trinitarians. been entertained, though nothing can be farther from the truth, that those who have been dissatisfied from the first with the doctrine of a Trinity in Unity, and have objected to it, have been only a few whimsical, conceited, obstinate persons, the followers of one Arius, who lived near 1500 years ago; or of Socinus, who was only of yesterday, in the time of our forefathers. Authorities of men are nothing: it is holy scripture alone which can decide this important point, and to that we must make our final appeal. But if the matter is to be put to the vote as it were, it is absolutely necessary that the less learned should be told, what upon enquiry will be found to be undeniably true, viz. that the fathers of the first three centuries, and

consequently *, *all christian people, for upwards of three hundred years after Christ, till the Council of Nice, were generally Unitarians, what is now called either Arian or Socinian, i. e. such as held our Saviour Christ to derive life, and being, and all his powers from God, though with different sentiments concerning the date of his original dignity and nature.*

By what means
the doctrine of
the Trinity pre-
vailed.

They should be told, that after this, for a course of between three and fourscore years, sometimes the *Arian*, sometimes the *Athanasian* was the prevailing doctrine, according as the reigning emperor happened to be a favourer of the one or the other opinion; till at length,

* Of this, the Creed called the Apostles, and the other creeds of those early times, are a pregnant proof; a collection of these creeds is to be found in King's "enquiry into the worship of the primitive church," page 58—64. And it no less appears from the additions made to these creeds in after time.

See also this fact proved, with regard to the *Arian* sentiments of the Antenicene fathers especially; and the objections of Bull and Waterland, confuted with accumulated evidence by Whitby, *Dissert. de Script. Interpret. præf. sectio quinta* throughout.

“ Theodosius

“Theodosius the Great”, (in Mosheim’s words, vol. I. cent. iv. p. 342.) raised the secular arm against the Arians with a terrible degree of violence, drove them from their churches, enacted laws, whose severity exposed them to the greatest calamities, and rendered, throughout his dominions, the decrees of the council of Nice triumphant over all opposition; so that the *public profession* of the Arian doc-

* The pious stratagem of *Saint* Amphilocheus, a bishop of those times, to instigate Theodosius to this inhuman work, deserves to be recorded. He affected one day, in the emperor’s presence, some very disrespectful and improper behaviour towards his son Arcadius, who had lately been declared Augustus. The emperor, highly incensed at it, ordered him to be immediately turned out of the palace. Upon which, the bishop, in a set speech retorted upon him; “Sir, you cannot bear a little slight put upon your Son, and are even enraged when he is not treated with due respect: doubt not but the God of the universe still more abhors those who blaspheme *his only Son*.” The emperor hearing this reproof, called him back, and begged his pardon, and soon after set on foot the persecution of the Arians. Unhappy the princes, who like Theodosius, Louis XIV. or our James II. are under the controul of priests and churchmen, and made the tools and implements of their impotent passions and vengeance, and little, mean superstition!

trine

trine was confined to the barbarous and unconquered nations, such as the Burgundians, Goths, and Vandals."

Still to take off undue prejudices against the *Unitarian* doctrine, as if it were a singularity or novelty only of late days, it should be farther inculcated, that for several centuries, till silenced and subdued by violence, many princes and states in Europe, that were not in subjection to the empire, continued to profess the Arian doctrine. "Towards the commencement of this (the sixth) century (saith the same historian, vol. I. p. 467.) the Arians were triumphant in several parts of Asia, Africa, and Europe. Many of the Asiatic bishops favoured them secretly, while their opinions were openly professed, and their cause maintained by the Vandals in Africa, the Goths in Italy, the Spaniards, the Burgundians, the Suevi, and the greatest part of the Gauls.—The triumphs of the Arians, however, were but transitory, and their prosperous days were entirely eclipsed, when the Vandals were driven out of Africa, and the Goths out of Italy, by the arms of Justinian."

It

It deserveth notice also, on this argument, that the Nestorians*, that have subsisted from the close of the fourth century, and are now in great numbers all over the East, are in general Unitarians. The account which Mosheim gives (vol. I. p. 412.) of their peculiar opinion concerning Christ, concludes thus — “ that *Christ* was therefore carefully to be distinguished from *God*, who dwelt in him as

* They could not well be other than Unitarians, who so strictly adhered to, and revered the name and writings of Theodore, Bishop of Mopsuestia, who flourished in the fourth century, and was one of the ablest interpreters of the scriptures in all antiquity, as appears from the very few fragments of his writings that have been preserved to us. Dr. Lardner has given a fine interpretation from him, of that confession of Thomas to Christ, “ my Lord, and my God,” John xx. 28. “ He did not (saith he) call *Christ*, *Lord* and *God*: but being astonished at the great miracle of his resurrection, and the full evidence of it that he had afforded him, *he praised God*, who had raised Christ from the dead. *Nor is the being raised from the dead a proof of Deity.*” Credib. vol. IX. part 2, p. 411. Dr. Whitby, in his *last thoughts*, p. 77, appears to have borrowed the solution of this passage from this author.

See also La Croze, *histoire du Christianisme des Indes*, vol. I. p. 362, 364.

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in his temple; and that Mary was to be called the *mother of Christ*, and not the *mother of God*."

Mosheim occasionally mentions the continuance and profession of the Arian doctrine concerning Christ, to the tenth century in Italy, amongst the Lombards, and among the barbarous nations, as they are called, and in the East; and how it sunk away, and the visible profession of it was lost. Gross darkness had now overspread the Christian world: the *apostacy* foretold by St. Paul (1 Tim. iv. 1.) had come on, and the dæmon-idolatry, the worship of dead men and women prevailed, and which still subsists among that large body of Christians, the Papists. Some light, however, shone in the midst of this darkness, and the witnesses to the truth prophesied, tho' in sackcloth and ashes.

The *divine Unity* in particular was never lost sight of by some few at least, who in different ways bore their testimony to it.

Roscellin, canon of Compiègne, about the close of the eleventh century, maintained, that it was impossible the Son of God should take on him the human nature

ture alone, without the Father and the Holy Ghost becoming incarnate also, unless by the three persons in the Godhead were meant three distinct persons or natures, which would be three Gods. And he seems to have maintained this, with a view to shew the strange consequences that would follow from supposing the Son to be the supreme God.

But it was an effectual argument, which is said to have been used by Anselm, archbishop of Canterbury, to silence this canon of Compiègne, and which would indeed silence and prevent all heresy and difference in opinion for ever; namely, “a Christian must not enquire about the truth of any thing which the church believes; but is simply to believe whatever the Romish church professeth to believe.”*

The famous Abelard, in the next century, by some said to have been a disciple of Roscellin, fell under a public prosecu-

* “Non esse Christiano inquirendum de veritate rei quam credit ecclesia, sed simpliciter credendum quicquid credit et confitetur ecclesia Romana.” Sandii nucl. hist. ecclesiast. l. ii. p. 105. Mosheim, vol. II. p. 351.

tion for heresy, and * St. Barnard (whom unflattering posterity has stripped of much of his saintship) was his accuser.

“ The charge brought against him was, that he had notoriously corrupted the doctrine of the Trinity, blasphemed against the majesty of the Holy Ghost, entertained unworthy and false conceptions of the person and offices of Christ, and the union of the two natures in him, denied the necessity of the divine grace to render us virtuous, and, in a word, that his doctrine struck at the fundamental principles of all religion.”

This was the colouring and representation of his adversary. The truth is, that being a man of genius and piety, he saw deep into the sore depravations of Christ's religion, and sought earnestly, but in vain, to remedy them ; and seems to have been completely an Unitarian.

Besides eminent individuals, who arose out of the bosom of the catholic church, as it was called, and asserted, that the one

* Mosheim, vol. II. p. 430, — who gives several instances of the violence with which St. Barnard opposed all reformation of the corruptions of the church.

God, the Father was the God of the Christians, there were still lesser churches and societies of Christians subsisting, who were founded and united on this Unitarian principle. Mosheim takes notice of some in Italy, who were called *Pasagini-ans*, in the twelfth century. "The second tenet (saith he) that distinguished this sect, was advanced in opposition to the doctrine of three persons in the divine nature; for they maintained that Christ was no more than *the first and purest creature of God*; nor will their adopting this opinion seem so surprising, if we consider the prodigious number of Arians that were scattered throughout Italy long before this period of time." vol. II. p. 456.

History also makes mention of other sects of the like Unitarian principles, who were often confounded with the Manicheans, and went under that and other obnoxious names. But they were all, in progress of time, either wholly extirpated, or driven into corners and silence. For nothing could now withstand the papal power, backed, as it were, with that of this whole western world. "The princes of
the

the earth; (as foreseen and foretold) *had one mind*, and agreed to *give their power and strength unto the beast*. — Revelation xvii. 13, 17.

So that, independent of its truth, or otherwise, it must be owned, that that which is called the catholic doctrine of the Trinity, was first established, and hath been all along supported, by violence and the secular power; an argument in its behalf surely not to be boasted of, and concerning which the gospel of Jesus is wholly silent.

CHAPTER II.

OF THE STATE OF THE UNITARIAN DOCTRINE, IN
OUR OWN COUNTRY MORE ESPECIALLY, FROM
THE ÆRA OF THE REFORMATION, WITH AN AC-
COUNT OF SOME OF THOSE CHRISTIANS WHO HAVE
PROFESSED IT.

THE principal divisions and differences
of protestants amongst us, till about
the time of the revolution, chiefly re-
lated to the imposition of unscriptural rites
and ceremonies, and points of discipline
and church-government. The Puritans,
the inferior and persecuted party, (but
who became persecutors in their turn when
they had the power) differed not at all
from their protestant brethren in the doc-
trinal points of the *Trinity, incarnation,*
original sin, works before justification, pre-
destination, and the like. Their adversa-
ries, and archbishop Laud at the head of
them, were the first that broke the ice in
this respect, and took upon them to refine
away the plain words of the xxxix articles
(*agreed upon for the avoiding of diversities of*
opinion,) which they disliked, or with
which they found themselves aggrieved.

And altho', in imitation of Heylin then, and Waterland in the days of our fathers, Dr. Nowell and others have laboured to rid the articles of holding forth the melancholy doctrine of an arbitrary election of some men to eternal life, and rejection of others, yet while the seventeenth article remains, vain will be their endeavours to soften the horror of it by any qualifying passages from the homilies, or particular expressions in the liturgy, or other writings of those who compiled it.

Will they allow the same kind of argument to be used and conclusions drawn, in a parallel case? It may then be proved, that the venerable compilers of our liturgy were *Arian* or *Socinian*. For, although in the litany throughout, and in many parts of the morning, evening, and communion-service, a Trinitarian form of worship is adopted: nevertheless, the *general* turn of address in the collects and prayers is to God, and not to Christ; and the Holy Ghost is almost left out wholly unworshiped: in which forms no Arian or Socinian would refuse to join.

But the minds of many, both of the clergy and laity, are now distressed on a
sub-

subject in our articles and liturgy, of far greater moment than the colour of the ministers vestments of the posture at the sacrament, or even the *secret* determinations of the divine mind about the future doom of his creatures, a curiosity which seems, from the nature of the thing, unhallowed and forbidden.

The proper *object* of divine worship was a matter left wholly untouched and unenquired into by the leading Divines, at the reformation from popery.

The philosophic and scholastic language and doctrine concerning the Trinity, which had been forming and settling from the time of the Nicene council, during the *apostacy* that followed, was never called in question, was received with the most implicit faith and reverence, and regarded as something more sacred even than holy scripture itself.

The greater part of our protestant predecessors, unhappily for us, seem to have had a superstitious awe and dread of looking into a subject involved, as this was, in learned mystery and darkness. Their prejudices ran so high in favour of it, and

they esteemed it so necessary and fundamental a point, that they could not suffer the least doubt of it in their own minds, or objection from others. They imagined the glorious work of reformation from the gross errors and idolatries of popery, which they had truly at heart, would be scandalized, and an invincible bar put to its progress, were any heretical opinions about this great point, to be found amongst them; or, if found, not severely animadverted upon and punished.

With what earnestness does Oecolampadius labour, in a letter to Bucer, Aug. 5, 1531, to clear himself and his friends from the imputation of giving any countenance to *Servetus's* book *de Trinitatis erroribus*, that was just then come out. “ I
 “ desire you would acquaint Luther, (says
 “ he) that this book was printed out of
 “ this country, and without our know-
 “ ledge. Our churches will be very ill
 “ spoken of, unless our divines make it
 “ their business to cry him down. I be-
 “ seech you in particular to keep a watch-
 “ ful eye over it, and to make an apology
 “ for

“ for our churches, at least in your confutation inscribed to the emperor *.”

And Mosheim tells us, that at the first dawn of the reformation, in Germany and Italy, there appeared some *who denied the divinity of Christ*. “ But the efforts of these men (saith he) were opposed with united zeal and vigilance, by the Romish, Reformed, and Lutheran churches;” i. e. *by burning, and putting them to the most cruel deaths* †.

To

* Account of Calvin’s treatment of Servetus. - 1724, p. 163. The letter concludes thus — “ We know not how that beast came to creep in among us. He wrests all passages of scripture to prove, that the Son is not coeternal and consubstantial with the Father, and that the man Christ is the son of God.”

† Mosheim accuses these persons, that they began to undermine the doctrine of Christ’s divinity, and the other truths that are connected with it, and proposed reducing the whole of religion to practical piety and virtue.” There could be nothing surely wrong in this, if they did not leave out of their system (and we have no reason to think they did leave out) those gospel motives to holiness, which arose from what appeared to them *the true nature and character of Christ*, and the goodness of God manifested in him.

Mosheim is a valuable historian, good-tempered, and in general candid. But he was a warm Lutheran,

To this violent and extreme prejudice, which was then entertained by almost all, against such as opposed the doctrine of the Trinity; and, to that other error connected with it, that it was lawful to put heretics to death, we must attribute Calvin's most ungenerous and barbarous behaviour towards the ingenious Spanish physician, and innocent sufferer, *Servetus*, whom he caused to be burn'd alive at Geneva, for his opinions concerning the Trinity; and we may not doubt, but that as Calvin sin'd ignorantly and in unbelief, this extenuated before God the crime of that his otherwise faithful servant, and virtuous holy man*.

We

and also a condemner of all those who did not hold *the three persons in the Godhead to be equal to each other in rank and dignity*; and is therefore to be read with caution, when he speaks on these points. See what he says of Eusebius, the ecclesiastical historian, Vol. I. p. 290.

* Beza, Calvin's disciple, takes every opportunity of raking in the ashes of this unhappy, much injured person, and insulting his memory after he was dead. Take one sample of his spirit from his comment on Coloss. i. 15, where our Saviour Christ is called *the first-born* of every creature. Sed est notandus quoque, hic

We must make the same allowance for our reformers in England at this period, who were actuated by the same blind zeal against the Anti-trinitarians, and behaved with no less barbarity towards such as had the misfortune to fall in their way.

hic locus adversus impium illum Servetum, &c. viz. “ But this passage particularly makes against the impious Servetus, who maintained, that Christ was the son of God only with respect to his human nature, and therefore denied that he was the eternal son of God. So that when he was going to receive the just punishment of his blasphemy (*to be burn’d alive at a stake, reader!*) he refused to give him the title of eternal son of God, though Paul here proclaims aloud, that before any creation, i. e. from eternity, for time began with creation, he not only was, but was born.” But our Dr. Hammond, tho’ otherwise far from favouring the sentiments of Servetus, would in Beza’s account have deserved to be burn’d alive for blasphemy as far as this text of scripture is concerned, for he could see no such doctrine in it as of Christ’s eternity. “ The word *πρωτότοκος*, says he, besides the ordinary notion of *first-born*, which cannot so well here refer to Christ’s eternal generation, because of that which is added to it; the *first-born of every creature*, which only gives him a precedence before all other creatures, and doth not attribute eternity to him; is used sometimes for lord, or person in power, &c.”

Hammond in loc.

Bishop Burnet, after mentioning a poor wrong-headed woman, that was burn'd for some extravagant notions concerning Christ, but who, as he observes, "was looked upon as a person fitter for Bedlam than a stake;" goes on to relate,

"Sometime after that, a Dutchman, George Van Parre, was also condemned and burn'd for denying the divinity of Christ, and saying, that the *Father only was God*.

"He had led a very exemplary life both for fasting, devotion, and a good conversation; and suffered with extraordinary composedness of mind. These things cast a great blemish on the reformers. It was said, they only condemned cruelty, when it was exercised on themselves, but were ready to practise it when they had power. The papists made great use of this afterwards in Queen Mary's time; and what Cranmer and Ridley then suffered, was thought a just retaliation on them, from that wise Providence, that dispenses all things justly to all men*."

* Burnet's abridgment of the history of the reformation, vol. ii. p. 79, 80, 81, 82.

This shocking cruelty of the English * and foreign reformers towards men who, in the use of their own understandings, and from searching into the scriptures, maintained that the *Father only was God* and to be worshiped, seems to have prevented their forming themselves into churches and societies, and terrified them into silence, if it did not for a time check all enquiry into such dangerous points ; for there is a degree of persecution which human nature cannot withstand.

But such intolerance towards their brethren and fellow-protestants, was less excusable in men, who *themselves*, against opinions sanctified by the authority of ages, and in contradiction to the established religion of their country, had asserted,

* These persecutions, in which Bishop Ridley is said to have borne a principal part, should not have been omitted in the life of that bishop, published by Gloucester Ridley, LL. B. 1763. Persecutors, and murderers of conscientious men, on whatever pretence, heathen, papal, or protestant, should be held up to just infamy on that account, however worthy in other respects and sinning through blind passion and ignorance, as did these eminent persons Cranmer and Ridley.

and

and made use of *their own* right of private judgment in interpreting the scriptures. If *they* might take such a latitude and liberty in what appeared wrong and grievous to them in the popish establishment, why take upon themselves to abridge *others* of the same liberty and privilege with respect to their new protestant establishment; and erect themselves into so many popes, instead of him at Rome, whose yoke they had so lately thrown off?

Methinks I hear these reformers say, (and some perhaps now would not stick to say) that tho' blasphemous opinions against the Trinity which these men propagated, were to be stopped at any rate and by the severest punishment, as an insult upon God, tending to bring religion into contempt, and make the worship of God neglected. And did they themselves less blaspheme or insult the sacramental God which the papists worshiped, when they called it a wafer-God, and refused to own and worship it?

But the papists, continued they, were palpably in the wrong, and guilty of direct idolatry and breach of the second
com-

commandment in worshipping, as the supreme God, what was obviously nothing but a piece of bread or cake. And did they appear less guilty in the eyes of the papists, who refused to worship the true God wherever he was owned really and immediately present? For Christ, whom they held, with the papists, to be the supreme God; and whose *real presence* (so called) in the sacrament they also maintained; had said of the sacramental bread, *this is my body*; and their papal adversaries would well reply, that he who was the truth itself was surely to be believed in what he said, and to be worshiped, wherever his body and presence were acknowledged.

But these Arians, said these Protestant persecutors, sapped the very foundations of Christianity, *denied the divinity of Christ, and the atonement, and that Jesus was to be worshiped as God*. And did not themselves deny what to the papists appeared equally fundamental; namely, that there is only one, holy, Roman, catholic, apostolic church, out of which there is no salvation?

What does all this on both sides amount to but barely averring, “ We are in the right,

right, you are in the wrong?" In short, by punishing their Protestant brethren for dissenting from them upon the doctrine of the Trinity or any other point, they fully justified the papists in putting them or their fathers to the stake, and contributed all that in them lay to perpetuate persecution and murdering of conscientious men, in all countries to the end of time.

Alas! Protestants had then to learn (I would there were none who had yet to learn) the unalienable rights of conscience, and the liberty from all human controul in that respect wherewith Christ hath made us free: they had to learn the common equality of all men in the things of God, the full import of that express injunction of their divine master, Matth. xxiii. 8. "*Be not ye called Rabbi, for one is your master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren:*" They had also to learn the *innocency of error*, from which none can plead exemption; and to bear with each other in their differing apprehensions concerning the nature of the first great cause and Father of all, and the person of Christ, and the manner and date of his deriving his being and high perfections from God;

a point

a point this latter, which was darkened and perverted at the very first by philosophy and vain science of the learned heathen converts, from which it hath not yet recovered itself: but surely it must also be owned to have been left involved in some obscurity by God himself in the writings of the apostles, (otherwise so many men, wise and good, would not have differed, and still continue to differ concerning it;) and so left, it should seem, on purpose to whet human industry and the spirit of enquiry in the things of God, to give scope for the exercise of men's charity and mutual forbearance of one another, and to be one great means of cultivating the moral dispositions, which is plainly the design of the holy spirit of God in the Christian revelation, and not any high perfection in knowledge which so few can attain.

One is grieved to find the reign of our great princess Elizabeth, stained with the blood of men, who, if they were mistaken in these abstruse points, were innocently so; for I find no sedition or crime laid to their charge, but only obstinacy in error.

Bishop

Bishop Burnet * speaks of some Anabaptists, who in the reign of Edward VI. had fled hither from Germany, whose peculiar sentiment about baptism, saith he, was the mildest of the opinions that they held; for their errors were, “ That there
 “ was not a Trinity of persons; that
 “ Christ was not God, and took not flesh
 “ of the virgin; and that a regenerate
 “ man could not sin †.”

Of this sect were those, I presume, of whom Fuller writes ‡. “ On Easter-day, 1575, was disclosed a congregation of Dutch Anabaptists without Aldgate, in London, whereof seven and twenty were

* Abridgment of hist. of reformation, vol. ii. p. 81.

† Mosheim relates, that at the very beginning of the reformation, several that went under the name of Anabaptists opposed the received doctrine of the Trinity. And it appears from Burnet, that this was one of the common tenets of the Anabaptists, at least of many of them. It is probable, that these people were of the number of those, who, as he tells us in another place, before the time of Luther and Calvin, lay concealed in almost all the countries of Europe, particularly in Bohemia, Moravia, Switzerland, and Germany.—See ecclesiastical history, vol. iv. p. 132, 169, and p. 183, note.

‡ Church history of Britain, book ix. p. 104, 105.

taken and imprisoned, and four, bearing faggots at Paul's Cross, solemnly recanted their dangerous opinions."

"Next month, one Dutchman and ten women were condemned, one of whom was converted to renounce her errors, eight were banished the land, but two of these unhappy creatures, more obstinate than the rest, were burned in Smithfield, and died (says my author) in great horror, with crying and roaring."

Our pious and very learned martyrologist, John Fox, whom the queen always called *her father Fox*, wrote to Elizabeth at the time, to move her to spare these poor wretches, or at least to mitigate their sentence, and change it into banishment, or some other death less horrible and inhuman. Fuller has preserved to us his letter*, penned in Latin, a language the queen well understood, and the common language of princes and the learned in those days. It is little inferior to the pure compositions of the Augustan age, and is enforced with such persuasive eloquence and

* Fuller being not in every one's hands, and said to be growing scarce, I put the original in an appendix at the end of the book.

argument, that one wonders it did not prevail *.

It is by the same honest and useful historian, that we are informed of another person, who was burnt for heresy in Smithfield, in the next reign. He has obliged us with a very circumstantial history of the man and his *pestilent opinions*, as he calls them, but not without premising a very singular caution against them †.

“ His

* Fuller thus apologizes for Elizabeth : “ Indeed damnable were their impieties, and she necessitated to this severity, who having formerly punished some *traitors*, if now sparing these *blasphemers*, the world would condemn her, as being more earnest in asserting her own safety, than *God's honour*.”

Our Saviour Christ, describing beforehand to his disciples the blind zeal and calm cruelty of their adversaries, John xvi. 2.—“ Yea, the time cometh, saith he, that whosoever killeth you, will think that he doth God service.” This has been too sadly verified even by his followers in destroying one another, which was an extreme not then to be thought of. 'Tis to be hoped, that the Christian world has learned a better lesson, after practising this bad one so long, and that the *time is now over*. God wanteth *no such services*. He is able and ready to vindicate his own *honour* when injured, if it can be injured, which it cannot, by the speculations of his sincere and erring creatures.

† “ Before we set down his *pestilent opinions*, may writer and reader fence themselves with prayer to God, against

“ His damnable tenets (saith he, *book x. p. 63.*) were as followeth.

1. *That the creed called the Nicene creed, and Athanasius creed, contain not a profession of the true Christian faith.*

2. *That Christ is not God of God, begotten, not made; but begotten, and made.*

3. *That there are no persons in the Godhead.*

4. *That Christ was not God from everlasting, but began to be God, when he took flesh of the Virgin Mary.*

5. *That the world was not made by Christ.*

6. *That the apostles teach Christ to be man only.*

7. *That there is no generation in God, but of creatures.*

8. *That this assertion, God to be made man, is contrary to the rule of faith, and monstrous blasphemy.*

9. *That Christ was not before the fulness of time, except by promise.*

10. *That Christ was not God, otherwise than an anointed God.*

against the infection thereof; lest otherwise, touching such pitch (though but with the bare mention) defile us, casually tempting a temptation in us, and awaking some corruption, which otherwise would sleep silently in our souls.”

11. *That Christ was not in the form of God equal with God, that is, in substance of God, but in righteousness, and giving salvation.*

12. *That Christ by his Godhead wrought no miracle.*

13. *That Christ is not to be prayed unto."*

This person seems to have agreed in sentiment intirely with those called Socinians, though Fuller calls him an Arian; but this last seems to have been a general name then given to all that denied the divinity of Christ.—But to go on with his history.

“ This year, 1611, that Arian suffered in Smithfield, being burn'd to death. His name *Bartholomew Legate*, native county Effex, person comely, complexion black, age about forty years. Of a bold spirit, confident carriage, fluent tongue, excellently skilled in the scriptures; and well had it been for him, if he had known them less, or understood them better; whose ignorance abused the *word of God*, therewith to oppose *God the Word*. His conversation, for aught I can learn to the contrary, very unblameable.”

“ King *James* (proceeds our historian) caused this *Legate* often to be brought to him,

him, and seriously dealt with him to endeavour his conversion. One time the king had a mind to surprize him into a confession of Christ's deity (as his majesty afterwards declared to a right reverend prelate, archbishop Usher) by asking him, *whether or no he did not daily pray to Jesus Christ?* which had he acknowledged, the king would infallibly have inferred, that *Legate* tacitly consented to Christ's divinity, as a searcher of the heart. But herein his majesty failed of his expectation, *Legate* returning, that indeed he had prayed to Christ in the days of his ignorance, but not for these last seven years. Hereupon the king in choler spurned at him with his foot; *away, base fellow, (saith he) it shall never be said that one stayeth in my presence, that hath never prayed to Our Saviour for seven years together."*

There seems not any thing in *Legate's* reply, deserving such an indecent and unmanly resentment. Did the Lord Jesus ever injoin men to pray to him? Did he not on the contrary always offer up his own prayers to God, *his Father and our Father, his God and our God*, John xx. 17. and also direct us so to do in our devotions; *when*

ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven? Luke xi. 2.

But bigotry and zeal for certain opinions, often little founded in God's word, have too generally been supposed to make up for defects in Christian obedience and moral righteousness. Historians represent this prince, as a man void of sincerity and integrity, a common swearer, intemperate, of very blameable obscene conversation, and who changed his religion, such as it was, just as his passions and interest directed: in Scotland, a warm Presbyterian and hater of ceremonies; then, when he crossed the Tweed, a most staunch churchman, a rigid Calvinist all the while; then more than half inclined towards Popery; and at last, verging towards Arminianism, as Laud, his favourite Buckingham's favourite and confessor, was rising into play and power.

"In the next month (as the same historian goes on to acquaint us) *Edward Wightman*, of Burton upon Trent, convicted before Richard Neile, bishop of Coventry and Litchfield, was burned at Litchfield for far worse opinions (if worse might be) than *Legate* maintained. Mary
Magdalene

Magdalene indeed was possessed with *seven* devils, but * *ten* several heresies were laid to *Wightman's* charge ; namely, those of Ebion, Cerinthus, Valentinian, Arius, Macedonius, Simon Magus, Manes, Manichæus, Photinus, and of the Anabaptists."

This list of no less than ten heresies, for which this person was condemned to so shocking a death, is very formidable, and deserves to be examined. Ebion, or the Ebionites, Arius and Photinus, severally held opinions concerning Christ, incompatible with each other ; therefore Wightman could but be charged with one of the three. Manes and Manichæus, are names of one and the same person or sect. Of Simon Magus, Origen tells us expressly, (*contr. Cels.* l. vi. p. 272.) that he was a total unbeliever, setting himself up, and being set up by his followers, as a rival to Christ. Here then are four of these heresies struck off the list.

Bishop Neile is upon record in our histories, but not for such qualities as St. Paul, in his letter to Timothy, requires

* So reckoned up in the warrant for his burning.
Fuller, Book x. p. 64.

in the episcopal character. But surely most unfit was he to sit in the seat of justice, who betrayed such ignorance of what he was to decide upon, as to condemn a man for opinions which it was impossible for him to hold. But there will be a rehearing in a future world of those causes, where frail mortals have been condemned for involuntary errors of judgment, and a reversal of every unrighteous sentence. *Wisdom* of Solomon, v. 1, 2.

I shall transcribe one more paragraph from our author.

“ About this time, a Spanish Arian being condemned to die, was notwithstanding suffered to linger out his life in Newgate, where he ended the same. Indeed, such burning of heretics much startled common people, pitying all in pain, and prone to asperse justice itself with cruelty, because of the novelty and hideousness of the punishment. And the purblind eyes of vulgar judgments looked only to what was next to them, the suffering itself, which they beheld with compassion, not minding the demerit of the guilt which deserved the same. Besides, such being unable to distinguish betwixt

constancy

constancy and *obstinacy*, were ready to entertain good thoughts even of the opinions of those heretics who sealed them so manfully with their blood. Wherefore king James *politically* preferred, that heretics hereafter, though condemned, should silently and privately waste themselves away in the prison, rather than to grace them, and amuse others with the solemnity of a public execution, which in popular judgments usurped the honour of a persecution.”*

I make no comments. The reader will make many for himself. But some will be pleased to contrast the spirit and temper of this first of the Stuarts, with that well attested anecdote of George II. of righteous and merciful memory; “who put a
 “ stop to a prosecution in the ecclesi-
 “ astical courts, commenced against the
 “ late Dr. Doddridge by some dignitaries
 “ of the church of England, for setting
 “ up an academy, and teaching youth
 “ learning and religion, in the town of
 “ Northampton; warmly declaring upon
 “ the occasion, that, *during his reign, there*
 “ *should be no persecution for conscience sake†.*”

* Fuller, as above, p. 64.

† Life of Doddridge by Orton, p. 251, 252.

During the troubles of the next reign, we find Mr. *John Biddle* in custody for his opinions; and his writings against the deity of Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, were ordered to be burn'd by the hands of the common hangman. Some zealots of the assembly of (Presbyterian) divines, moved that he might be put to death: for he was so bold in propagating his opinion, that he gave great offence by it.

It was happy for him, these Presbyterian divines had not power equal to their good-will, or he might have been burn'd in the same fire with his writings. The parliament understood better the rights of nature and of mankind, altho' they gave way to his being imprisoned, perhaps to screen him from his enemies. And, with the same humane view afterwards, when the council had sent him to Newgate for giving fresh disturbance by his boldness, the protector thought it best to send him out of the way, and accordingly transported him to Scilly, and allowed him one hundred crowns a year for his maintenance. The usurper Cromwell, with all his sins against the liberties of his country, "always pro-
fessed

fessed * it to be his belief, *that men had a right to think and act for themselves in matters of religion, and that so long as they behaved peaceably, they were free to dissent from the magistrate and the priest.*" This is highly to his honour : and his practice was conformable to his principles.

Biddle remained in the isle of Scilly till the year 1658, when the noise being over, he was set at liberty. After the protector's death he set up a private conventicle in London, which continued till the restoration, when the church being restored to its coercive power, he was apprehended while preaching, and committed to prison, where he died in September, 1662. He had such a prodigious memory, that he could repeat all St. Paul's epistles in Greek, and was reckoned by those of his persuasion a sober man, and so devout, that he seldom prayed without lying prostrate on the ground †." "It was one of Mr. *Biddle's* lessons, that it is a duty, not only to relieve, but to visit the sick and poor; because they are hereby encou-

* Harris's life of Oliver Cromwell, p. 40, 43.

† Neal's history of the Puritans, vol. iv. p. 136, 137, 138.

raged and comforted, and we come to know of what nature and degree their straits are, and that some are more worthy of assistance than others: and their condition being known, sometimes we are able to assist them by our counsel or our interest, much more effectually than by the charity we do or can bestow upon them."

—*Life of Mr. Thomas Firmin*, p. 10, 11.

It would be inexcuseable to pass over, in silence, a disciple of Mr. *Biddle's*, an Unitarian, and great support of their cause; one, though not distinguished by nobility of birth, or titles, or deep learning, yet in real usefulness to mankind the first citizen of the first city in the world; and likely to keep his pre-eminence in the heavenly Jerusalem, if being indefatigably active and eminent in doing good, in assisting and relieving the poor, beyond all other men; if integrity, piety, humility, and active endeavours in the cause of truth and virtue, can intitle, and nothing else can intitle the faithful Christian to that high distinction and honour.

This was Mr. *Thomas Firmin*, merchant and citizen of London; a name now, it may be, unknown to many, yet the

I

friend

friend of Whichcote, Worthington, Wilkins, Fowler, Tillotson; with all whom he lived in friendship, and in the greatest intimacy with some of them, notwithstanding their wide difference in opinion, which he never dissembled, nor, to their honour be it recorded, did it cause any coolness in their regards towards him.

“ Mr. *Biddle* first persuaded him*, *that the Unity of God is an Unity of person as well as of nature*; that the Holy Spirit is indeed a person, but not God. He had a great and just esteem for Mr. *Biddle*’s piety, exemplariness, and learning; and is that

* “ Mr. Firmin’s zeal for his instructor was so great, that he ventured, while he was only an apprentice, to deliver a petition for his release out of Newgate to Oliver Cromwell, who gave him this short answer: “ You curl-pate boy you, do you think I’ll shew any favour to a man who denies his Saviour, and disturbs the government?”—*Birch’s life of Tillotson*, p. 293.

This does not contradict what was above remarked of Cromwell’s tolerating principles. It might be necessary for the chief governor of the nation to say this in public in those times, especially to so young a petitioner. And there is a pleasantry and good-nature in his manner, of which the gloomy bigot is utterly incapable. This is farther confirmed by his allowing him 25l. a year to support him in his exile, no inconsiderable sum in those days.

friend,

friend, mentioned in Mr. *Biddle's* life, who gave him his bed and board, till he was sent prisoner by protector Cromwell to the isle of Scilly ; and when there, Mr *Firmin*, with another friend, procured him a yearly pension of a hundred crowns from the protector, besides what he obtained from other friends, or gave himself *."

Archbishop Tillotson, in his sermon at the funeral of the Rev. Mr. Tho. Gouge, says, " This was, I think, that which gave the first hint to that worthy and useful citizen, Mr. *Thomas Firmin*, of a much larger design, which hath been prosecuted by him for some years, with that vigour and great success in this city, that many hundreds of poor children and others, who lived idle before, unprofitable both to themselves and the public, are continually maintained in work, and taught to earn their own livelihood: he being, by the generous assistance and charity of many well-disposed persons of all ranks, enabled to bear the unavoidable loss and charge of so vast an undertaking ;

* Life of Mr. Thomas Firmin, p. 10.

See also a fine letter of Cromwell's to the governor of Edinburgh castle, in *Whitelock's* memorials, p. 459.
and

and by his own forward inclination to charity, and his unwearied diligence and activity, extraordinarily fitted to sustain and go through the incredible pains of it."

" During his last sickness, which was very short, he was visited by his most dear friend (Dr. Fowler) the bishop of Gloucester. What passed between them, his Lordship hath made me to know, under his own hand, in these words: " Mr. *Firmin* told me, he was now going: and " I trust, said he, God will not condemn " me to worse company, than I have " loved and used in the present life. I " replied, that he had been an extraordinary example of charity: the poor had " a wonderful blessing in you: I doubt " not, these works will follow you, if " you have no expectation from the merit " of them, but rely on the infinite goodness of God, and the merits of our Saviour. Here he answered, I do so: and " I say, in the words of my Saviour, *when I have done all, I am but an unprofitable servant.*" He was in such an agony of body for want of breath, that I did not think fit to speak more to him, but only gave him assurance of my earnest prayers for

for him, while he remained in this world. Then I took a solemn and affectionate farewell of him; and he of me*.”

Mr. *Firmin*, although no writer himself, was a great encourager and publisher of the works of others, and had some concern in several volumes of Unitarian tracts, published about the time of the revolution. His life, from which the above extracts are made, is worthy to be perused; as also an admirable sermon, occasioned by his death, printed along with it.

In the year 1694 began the great contest concerning the Trinity, betwixt two celebrated doctors of the church, *Sherlock* and *South*; each of them reputed and reputing himself orthodox, and each of them espoused by learned and powerful partizans.

Dr. *Sherlock* expressly asserted, that the three persons in the Trinity are three distinct infinite Minds or Spirits, and three individual Substances. Dr. *South* held only one infinite eternal Mind or Spirit, with three Somethings that were not three distinct Minds or Substances, but three modes, faculties, attributes, relations, relative properties, subsistencies, as they

* Life of Mr. *Firmin*, p. 82.

were variously denominated. Dr. *Sherlock* was accused, and with great justice, if words have any meaning, of polytheism, or holding *three Gods*. Dr. *South*, on the other hand, came under the imputation of explaining away the Trinity, and falling into the Sabellian, or Unitarian system: and accordingly some of the Socinians took advantage of the Doctor's explication of the doctrine of the church, and declared in their writings, that they should not be backward to give their approbation to the liturgy and articles, if that was the kind of Trinity which the language therein used was intended to inculcate.

The university of Oxford, to whom *Sherlock* was obnoxious on account of his political principles, declared for Dr. *South*; and the vice-chancellor and heads of colleges and halls, assembled November 25, 1695, passed this censure on the opposite doctrine, viz. "That the assertion, there are three infinite distinct Minds and Substances in the Trinity, is false, impious, and heretical, contrary to the doctrine of the catholic church, and particularly to the received doctrine of the church of England."

But this censure had no consequences. As both parties made no scruple of using the common language of the church, and held *three Somewhats*, they were never called in question, or their orthodoxy impeached. Only, the quarrel ran so high from the pulpit, that the state thought proper to interpose its authority to stop it; and accordingly an injunction came forth from his Majesty King William, bearing date February 2, 1695, with directions to the archbishops and bishops to be observed in their respective dioceses. The two first of these were,

1. That no preacher whatsoever, in his sermon or lecture, do presume to deliver any other doctrine concerning the blessed Trinity, than what is contained in the holy scripture, [and is agreeable to the three creeds, and the thirty-nine articles.]

2. That, in the explication of this doctrine, they carefully avoid all new terms, [and confine themselves to such ways of expression as have been commonly used in the church.]

N. B. If the words hooked in a parenthesis had been omitted, there would have been a better and a more lasting foundation laid for peace and truth. These

These disputes among divines, their abuse of each other, and the strange distinctions and equivocation to which they were reduced to defend themselves, and maintain their directly contrary opinions, contributed much to the spreading of the Unitarian doctrine *: yet it is to be feared, many were thereby indisposed to revealed religion itself, when they saw that its great doctors could not agree about the object of their worship, whether *One Being*, or *Many*.

Whoever would see to what extravagant positions, subversive of all religion and natural knowledge of God, men will let themselves be driven, rather than give up an hypothesis once espoused, needeth only

* “ I own I have been unsettled in my notions from the time I read Dr. Sherlock’s book of the Trinity, which sufficiently discovered how far many were gone back towards polytheism: I long tried what I could do with some Sabellian turns, making out a Trinity of somewhats in one single mind. I found that, by the tritheistical scheme of Dr. Sherlock and Mr. Howe, I best preseryed a Trinity, but I lost the Unity: By the Sabellian scheme of modes, subsistencies, and properties, &c. I best kept up the divine Unity; but then I had lost a Trinity, such as the scriptures discover; so that I could not keep both in view at once.” *Emlyn’s works*, vol. i. p. 15.

to read “ Dr. Clarke’s *Observations on Dr. Waterland’s second defence of his Queries* ;” which, I believe, closed the controversy at that time, and ought to have closed it for ever *.

The Unitarian Christians were much affected by a shocking act of the state, which was suffered to pass in these early days of the revolution, and which will remain an indelible reproach to it.

For, “ by 9 and 10 W. 3. ch. 32. If any person educated in, or having made profession of the Christian religion, shall be convicted in any of the courts of Westminster, or at the assizes, of *denying any one of the persons of the Holy Trinity to be God, &c.* he shall for the *first* offence, be judged incapable of any office ; and for the *second* offence, shall be disabled to sue any action, or to be guardian, executor, or administrator, or to take any legacy or deed of gift, or to bear any office, civil or military, or benefice ecclesiastical for ever, and also shall suffer imprisonment for three years.”

If we reflect on that high estimation, in which the celebrated Dr. Clarke and his writings were held soon after this time, by many

* See also *Emlyn*, vol. ii. p. 451.

in high place, and in all places; and also how great a number have espoused his sentiment, or that of the Socinians, concerning our Saviour Christ, we shall not be able to think of the existence of such a law as this without horror. But that benevolence of the present times, which forbids the execution, should hasten the repeal of it.

It would carry us too far beyond our purpose, or here would be the place, in the beginning of the present century, to treat of Mr. *Thomas Emlyn*, an Englishman, minister of a congregation of protestant dissenters in Dublin; who “so nobly suffered unto bonds and imprisonment, and great worldly losses, for maintaining the supreme unequalled majesty of the One God and Father of all, under a most unrighteous persecution against him,” carried on by his own people, dissenters, and abetted by some great churchmen in Ireland.

His works will be a lasting monument of his genius, learning, piety, and integrity; written in a clear animated style, equalled by few, exceeded by none, in our language, and with such invincible force of argument, as still to promote that truth

for which he was not unwilling to suffer.

The persecution of the learned Mr. *James Pierce* of *Exeter*, eminent also for his writings, and sufferings in the same cause, amongst the dissenters; and, of another learned and excellent person, Mr. *Tomkins* of *Newington*, must on the same account be passed over unnoticed.

The famous Mr. *William Whiston* ended his course only about twenty years ago, and his story is so well known, that little needeth to be said of the persecution he underwent, and his most unjust expulsion from his professorship in Cambridge in the year 1710, for maintaining, that *the only God of the Christians is God the Father*. But his undissembled piety from his youth to extreme old age, his integrity, and chearfulness under the loss of his preferments, his constancy and courage, can never be enough celebrated and admired.

Those arguments of holy scripture, by which he proved his grand point, have never been confuted. But some of the good effects of his labours were obstructed by an unlucky infatuation with which he was possessed for some ancient writings, particularly the *Apostolical Constitutions*;
which

which he maintained to be the most sacred of the canonical books of the New Testament, although it must appear to all unprejudiced persons to have been written in the fourth century, but probably then compiled out of some earlier compositions of the first and second. Struck with admiration of the book at first, as so much favouring his Arian sentiments, he thought it quite *divine*; and being of a warm imagination and sanguine temper, when once in such an error he could hardly get out of it. A small speck this, in so bright a character.

The inscription on his tomb-stone, at Lyndon in the county of Rutland, has done justice to his memory. It is not printed along with any of his works that I have seen, and therefore may not unusefully or improperly here find a place.

“ Here lyeth the body of the *Rev. Mr. William Whiston, M. A.* some time professor of the mathematics in the university of Cambridge; who was born Dec. 9, 1667, and died Aug. 22, 1752, in the 85th year of his age. Endued with an excellent genius; indefatigable in labour and study, he became learned in divinity,

ancient history, chronology, philosophy, and mathematics. Fertile in sentiment, copious in language, skilful to convey instruction, he introduced the Newtonian philosophy, then buried in the deepest recesses of geometry, into public knowledge, and thereby displayed the wonderful *works* of God: More desirous to discover *his will*, he applied himself chiefly to the examination and study of the holy scriptures: Resolved to practise it, he sacrificed great worldly advantages and greater expectations, that he might preserve the testimony of a good conscience. Firmly persuaded of the truth and importance of revealed religion, he exerted his utmost ability, to enforce the evidence, to explain the doctrines, and promote the practice of Christianity: worshiping God with the most profound submission and adoration, the supreme majesty of the One God and Father of all, through the intercession and mediation of our Lord Jesus Christ, by the grace and influence of the Holy Spirit; and testifying the sincerity of his profession by the due obedience of a holy life. Strictly tenacious of his integrity, equally fervent in piety and charity,

ardent

ardent to promote the glory of God and the good of mankind, zealous in the pursuit of truth and the practice of virtue, he persevered with faith and patience, steadfast and immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, through many trials and much tribulation, to the end of his course, full of days, and ripe for Paradise, in a firm assurance of a joyful resurrection to everlasting life and happiness. *Now, reader, whoe'er thou art, if thou canst not attain to the measure of his learning and knowledge, yet it is in thy power to equal him in piety, probity, holiness, and other Christian graces; and thou mayest hereby obtain, together with him, thro' the mercies of God, and merits of Christ, an everlasting crown of glory."*

Few men in any age have by their writings cast more light on the dark parts of the word of God, or more laboured to restore his true worship, than Dr. Samuel Clarke, rector of St. James's, Westminster. Skilful in mathematics and natural philosophy, a most exact critic in the learned languages and in the Hebrew, and furnished with all other knowledge that might assist in the great design, he made

it the whole bent of his studies to illustrate the scriptures and teach men virtue and true religion. His most admired work, *the Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity*, hath put it in the power of all sincere enquirers, even of the meanest capacities, to judge for themselves on a point of the greatest importance; namely, what, and who is the God they are to worship; “whether three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; or one person, the Father only be the One living and true God, everlasting, without body, parts, or passions; of infinite power, wisdom and goodness, the maker and preserver of all things, both visible and invisible.”—*Article I.*

And from the most exact, clear, and impartial examination of all the texts of the New Testament relating to the doctrine of the Trinity, he hath irrefragably demonstrated the great Unitarian doctrine of nature and revelation, *that there is but One God, the Father, to whom alone absolutely supreme honour is due, and to whom divine worship and prayer is to be offered.*

The Rev. Mr. Jones, in his *Catholic Doctrine of the Trinity*, hath availed himself of this method of our great author, and endeavoured thereby to make out the quite contrary doctrine. That gentleman's *introductory discourse*, compared with Dr. Clarke's *introduction*, will shew the temper of each, and the methods they pursue. Those that compare the different interpretations given of the same texts, will observe that Dr. Clarke gives the sense the context requires; Mr. Jones, any sense the words will bear that may suit his system, in which way the Koran of Mahomet might be proved to be a most orthodox book, and any thing made out of any thing. Thus his *first proof** of the Trinity

* “ Sciens ac volens supersedeo a multis testimoniis quibus usi sunt veteres. Plausibile illis visum est citare ex Davide xxxiii. 6, verbo Domini cœli firmati sunt, et spiritu oris ejus omnis virtus eorum; ut probarent non minus Spiritus Sancti opus esse mundum quam Filii. Sed quum in Psalmis usitatum sit bis idem repetere, et quum apud Jesaiam spiritus oris idem valeat (xi. 4.) atque sermo, infirma illa ratio fuit.”

Calvin. *Instit.* l. i. p. 22.

Calvin was by some accused of Judaizing and Arianizing, because he gave up this passage, and Psalm ii.

7. Genesis

Trinity in Unity is that text, Psalm xxxiii. 6.—“ By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.” Whence he in his way infers—“ The whole Trinity therefore created the world.” And he proves this *Trinity* to be but *One* Lord, in the same curious way, from Isaiah xlv. 24.—*Jones’s Catholic Doctrine*, p. 69.

Conclusions to
be made from
the foregoing
history.

The religion of Christ, or the will of God by him delivered to men, was easy to be understood by those to whom he and his apostles first preached it. This his religion was afterwards put down in writing by his apostles and disciples. And *this faith once delivered to the saints* (Jude 3.) is to be carefully preserved by us. It would be impious to take upon us to add

7. Genesis xix. 24. John x. 30. Hebrews i. 5. 1 John v. 7. and would not allow them as sufficient proofs respectively, of the Trinity, or the divinity of the Son, and Holy Spirit. He did not deserve the aspersions of some of his warm adversaries, but his good sense led him to see, that these texts would rather weaken than support the doctrine of the Trinity. On the last text, 1 John v. 7, his remark is, “ Quod dicit tres esse unum, ad essentiam non refertur, sed ad consensum potius.”

to

to or diminish aught from it. This however has been done by many, though oft, I believe, without design and without knowing it. It was by insensible degrees, and the work of many ages; by enlarging creeds one after another, and after all by the laborious sophistry of monkish schoolmen, that the present complicate system of an orthodox belief was framed. And it must be by the same slow steps and labour, that we can expect to clear away and remove this rubbish of ages, which has disfigured, and nearly smothered the fair fabric of the word of God.

These our honourable predecessors, with others before them, who, with great labour, and hazard, and loss, have stood up to oppose the corruptions of God's true worship, are to be followed and imitated by us. And, as they have made the way of truth more easy and accessible to us, we shall be without excuse, if we do not endeavour to secure and improve the discoveries they have made, and the advantages they have gained for us, and to hand down the lamp of God to light those that come after us.

Pious persons may be shocked at first in surveying the great corruptions which have all along prevailed, and still prevail in the Christian church. Besides those errors which we see and lament at home amongst ourselves, how deformed the dæmon worship, the worship of dead men and women deified, and together with it the pitiful idolatry of a *breaden God**, which has subsisted for many ages, and

* “ It is affirmed by the church of Rome, that their God being eaten, may by the squeamish stomach be cast up again; witness that canon, *si sacerdos eucharistiam, &c.* which doth exhort *the priest when he doth vomit up the sacrament to wipe it, and try once more to eat it.* They also intimate that the communicant may spit *Him* out upon the ground; witness the caution in their ritual, *that after the reception of the eucharist, they do not for a season spit, ne sacramenti species de ore decidant, lest the species of the sacrament should fall from their mouth.* And lastly, to compleat their blasphemy, they do acknowledge that, in diseases which take away digestion, their God comes whole out of the draught; *so it hath happened, saith Paludanus; so it must happen in this case, saith Soto, for shame should not constrain us to deny the truth.* Now to be spit out of the mouth, or cast out of the stomach, or to be ejected at the draught, are the peculiar excellencies of this *mass-God*, which all the follies of the heathen cannot parallel.”—*Whitby. Irrisio Dei panarii Romanensium, the derision of the breaden God worshipped in the*

and still subsists in the church of Rome ; that is, a large part of Christendom ?

But we should consider, that although God is perfect, and all that comes from him is originally so : yet man is a creature full of prejudice, which he takes in with his nurse's milk, and overwhelmed with various errors ; and that, as there is scarce any evidence so clear which passion and corrupt interest will not incline him to set aside, there is no doctrine so plainly laid down, which early prepossession and wrong habits will not darken and perplex. Unless then Almighty God had new moulded the race of men, when he gave them a revelation of his will, the pure doctrine of the gospel would unavoidably take a tincture from the manners, dispositions, and habits of those who received it, as water from the beds of minerals through which it passes. The truth of God therefore was necessarily left to take its chance

the Romish church, p. 74, 75. This fine tract of this learned man and true Protestant, deserves to be adopted by our *religious societies* in the list of their books to be dispersed, and would help to preserve our own people Protestants, and convert the Papists themselves from their more than pagan idolatry, much better than graver books.

in the world, if we may so speak, and to be more or less corrupted in different times and places; yet not without his own watchful oversight in the mean while, and the fullest assurances and predictions, for the encouragement of his true worshippers, “that truth and virtue would finally prevail over the spirit of error and wickedness.” We are not judges how far God intended his dispensations of light and knowledge, and moral improvement, to take effect at any given time: but undoubtedly they are made to attain the end he proposed, though not all that our precipitate judgments would lead us to expect.

What Mr. Whiston remarks concerning Bishop Smallridge, may, I apprehend, influence some worthy men like him, to sit down contented with established forms of religious worship which they are far from approving; namely, “the dread of
 “ the ill consequences of discovering so
 “ great and lasting errors in the church,
 “ with a suspicion of the harm politicians
 “ and unbelievers would turn such discoveries to, instead of uniting with
 “ good

“ good men to correct the errors themselves *.”

Politicians and unbelievers cannot certainly be expected to turn reformers. But with regard to the discoveries which Bp. Smallridge was afraid of making and having divulged, relating, I suppose to the Athanasian and scholastic Trinity, which has been held in veneration and worshiped these fourteen centuries past, whatever was the case in his time, its little agreement with the scriptures or early fathers has been long no secret to the *Morgans*, the *St. Johns*, the *Voltaires*, &c. nor have they made any secret of it; but have thence taken a handle to accuse some of our great and learned churchmen of shutting their eyes for political ends, or else believing as little of the revealed system as themselves.

We may assure ourselves, that no discovery of error, no fair representation of facts can hurt true religion, tho' it may shake the empire of priestcraft and superstition. We ought rather to be the more excited to search and enquire, and bear our public but peaceable testimony to op-

* Whiston's life of Dr. S. Clarke, p. 97.

pressed truth, because for want of this having been done in time, things are come to the pass which we now complain of, and with which the adversaries of our common faith reproach us.

But those men will fall under heavy condemnation, who persist in abetting known corruptions, out of mean lucrative views, and the flattery of princes and great men, and instead of lending a helping hand to the work, calumniate and discourage those who seek to remove these stumbling-blocks to truth and integrity.

This looks peculiarly ill in men famous for learning and abilities, teachers of humanity, virtue, and religion, who are placed on an eminence, and draw others after them. “Wo unto the world, because of offences: for it must needs be that offences come: but wo to that man by whom the offence cometh.”—Matthew xviii. 7.

In the mean time, *many are purified, and made white, and tried*, Daniel xii. 10, and *the thoughts of many hearts are revealed*, Luke ii. 35; the true characters of men are drawn out and brought to light, and
many

Phai. Boanish.

many known and unknown purposes of the divine government are answered and served for the production of virtue, and man's real felicity and perfection. Happy, where no undue motive influences, no blameable passion, or disgust at human things and the course of the world; nothing but the pure love of truth, and sense of duty to the great searcher of hearts, which can be known to him alone.

CHAPTER III.

THERE IS BUT ONE GOD, THE FATHER: RELIGIOUS WORSHIP TO BE OFFERED TO THIS ONE GOD, THE FATHER, ONLY.

THAT God is *One*, and consequently, the object of worship *One only*, is of first importance in religion. The wretched state of morals in the heathen world flowed from their polytheism. And no one can remain many hours in a popish country without seeing the pernicious effect of their idolatrous worship *, in their streets and on the high roads. Nor can we Protestants be cleared from some fatal mistakes here, the source of great unhappiness and distraction in the breasts of many, and of much wrong practice. For it is obvious, from the conversation and writings of many amongst us, that they are far gone into the doctrine of *Three equal Gods*, whom they figure and represent to themselves under different and very opposite characters. Hence they conceive of God the Father, always with dread, as a

* Erasmus, in his colloquies, has finely ridiculed this depraved superstition of the Papists. See particularly his *Naufragium*.

being of severe unrelenting justice*, revengeful, and inexorable without full satisfaction

* “ Is there no shelter from the eye
Of a *revenging God*?

Jesus, to thy dear wounds I fly,
Bedew me with thy blood.

Those guardian drops my soul secure,
And wash away my sin ;

Eternal Justice frowns no more,
And conscience smiles within.”

Watts's lyric poems, p. 84.

“ *Rich were the drops of Jesus' blood,*
That calm'd his frowning face,
That sprinkl'd o'er the burning throne,
And turn'd the wrath to grace.”

Watts's hymns, p. 229.

This pious and excellent person lived to see his error and changed his sentiments intirely on this point, before he died. Towards the close of his days, but before his faculties were impaired, by a long, serious, dispassionate attention to the sacred writings, he was brought to that sentiment concerning the person and character of Christ, which seems to have been that of his apostles and first followers, before philosophy had corrupted the faith. For this he was rudely attacked from the press after his death, by a famous champion of orthodoxy of the times, but did not want defenders of his fair unspotted name. “ The character of the gentle, the ingenious, the pious Dr. Watts, (says one of them) must be sacrificed by the fury of two or three sermons that are filled with *aqua fortis*. And why? truly, because the Doctor had *once* believed a

tisfaction made to him for the breach of his laws. God the Son, on the other hand, is looked upon as made up of all compassion and goodness, interposing to save men from the Father's wrath, and subjecting himself to the extremest sufferings on that account. And God the Holy Ghost is described in characters of the utmost love and kindness, ever waiting, and ever ready to bestow his gracious communications and assistances for the salvation of men.

But how contrary is this language to the holy scriptures, and how injurious to *Trinity in Unity*. Afterwards his judgment altered, and he published two tracts, in which he seems to favour the *Sabellian* or *Socinian* hypothesis. So far from being a reproach to Dr. *Watts*, that he changed his sentiments, it will be looked upon by all sober, judicious, consistent protestants, as reflecting much glory upon his character; tho' Mr. Bradbury happens to think it a mark of his own steadfastness, that he receded not from his education-principles. Notwithstanding this, he should allow it natural for men to have more light open upon them, who are not afraid of free inquiry; whilst the steadfastness of others may be owing to the inveteracy of their prejudices, that will not suffer them to make any farther discoveries."——*Extract from a pamphlet, intitled, "The character of the Rev. T. Bradbury, taken from his own pen in his discourses on baptism, printed for Cooper, 1749.*

the *God of all grace*, (1 Pet. v. 10.) the heavenly Father and God over all, whom we are there taught alone to look up unto in prayer, to expect all from him, to refer all to him, *who* (John iii. 16.) *so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son to save men from perishing for ever*; and *who* (Luke xi. 13.) *giveth the Holy Spirit to them that ask him*.

It was in much mercy, that this gracious parent of mankind, when he first made man, did not leave him to the slow process of reason to find out his Maker and benefactor, whom it was his chief happiness to know and to adore. For although speculative enquiring minds may, in a course of time, arrive at the discovery and knowledge of a first great cause and benevolent author of all things; yet, as few have leisure, or are born to be philosophers, some more simple and striking evidence of the being and providence of God was to be desired. He therefore gave our first parents a sensible and immediate knowledge of himself, his will, their duty and happiness. This could not fail of being handed down in some degree to their posterity.

And we find it actually was so. For the best heathen authors profess to build much of their knowledge of God on tradition, to which our modern philosophers owe more than they will confess; and in the multiplicity of false objects of worship into which mankind have been led, the persuasion of One Supreme over all has still secretly and universally prevailed.

In the *Bible*, which contains an authentic account of the divine interpositions, and communications to men, one would naturally expect the great point, whether there be *One* God or more, to be settled so as to leave no room for doubt or uncertainty. And indeed, an unprejudiced person, of ordinary understanding, that took that book in his hand, would never apprehend that it was designed to teach him to philosophize and make nice distinctions about some *unknown essence or substance of God, and three persons in that essence, equally God, and equally to be worshipped, and yet all three but one God*. He would see that there was but One God without any such perplexity and refinement,

ment, as clearly as he would see that he existed at all.

Accordingly * the Hebrews, who were the depositaries of these divine revelations, and above all other people favoured with them, never had any different doctrine, or disputes on so clear a point. They never dreamed of a *plurality in the deity*, as we Christians have affected to speak, altho' some have fathered it upon them, and have pretended to gather it from the plural termination of a Hebrew word *Elohim*, indifferently applied to God and man, and

* The following declaration of Bishop *Beveridge* will carry weight along with it, especially as he himself thinks he can see the *mystery of the Trinity* in the Old Testament, tho' he owns the Jews have never been able to see it. "The great *mystery of the Trinity*, saith he, though it be frequently intimated in the Old Testament, yet it is an hard matter rightly to understand it without the New: insomuch, that the Jews, though they have had the law above three thousand, and the prophets above two thousand years among them, yet to this day they could never make this an article of faith; but they, as well as the Mahometans, still assert, that *God is only One in person as well as in nature.*—*Private Thoughts*, part ii. p. 36, 37.

from the Chaldee Targums *, or paraphrases of the Old Testament, which yet do countenance no such doctrine.

The

* *Chaldee Targums.*] Dr. Allix, in his *Judgment of the ancient Jewish church*, labours much to make this ancient Jewish church *Trinitarian*. But all the Jews of later times cry out against such an imputation upon them and their ancestors, and unquestionably the Trinity is one of those doctrines that prejudice them most against Christianity. I make no doubt but this gross error and misapprehension has arisen from Christians, like Dr. Allix, going to the reading of the Chaldee and Hebrew writings, full of their own *Trinitarian* ideas, and fixing them upon words which the writers never intended to convey any thing of the kind. Our Prideaux, and Louis Capellus, have so well explained this matter, and set aside these fancies, that the reader will thank me for producing them :
 “ With much better reason (says the former) does the
 “ same Frenchman (father Simon) disapprove of the
 “ use of the Targums for the proof of the *Λόγος*, or
 “ *Word*, in that sense in which we find it expressed in
 “ the first chapter of the gospel of St. John. For
 “ through all those *Targums*, in a great number of
 “ places where mention is made of *God* in the original
 “ *Hebrew*, it being rendered *the word of God* in the
 “ Chaldee interpretation, hence the Chaldee *Mimra*,
 “ which in that phrase signifieth *the Word*, hath been
 “ thought to correspond with the Greek *Λόγος* in that
 “ gospel, and both exactly to denote the same thing.
 “ And therefore several learned men have endeavoured
 “ to explain the one by the other, and from hence to
 “ prove

The people of God have in all times asserted the divine Unity in the strongest terms.

“ prove the divinity of our Saviour. But others, as well as Monf. Simon, being sensible of this phrase in the Chaldee being an idiom of that language which may be otherwise explained, they are against pressing any argument from it for this point, because it is capable of an answer to which we cannot well reply :” [i. e. I presume, it would prove, that the *Word* in the beginning of John’s gospel is wrongly applied to Christ, and is nothing but a description, in the Hebrew way, of *God himself*, which seems the true interpretation, tho’ Prideaux and many others have been unwilling to admit it.]—*Prideaux’s Connection*, &c. vol. iv. p. 749, 750.

Capellus says, “ Although I will not directly condemn the conjecture, I think it not sufficiently solid against an obstinate Jew. For it is certain the Chaldee paraphrase continually uses the term, *Mimra, Word*, for the reciprocal pronoun, *himself*. Continual examples occur of this way of speaking. And, therefore, *the Word of the Lord, Mimra Dei*, can signify no more according to them, than *the Lord himself*.”—*Lud. Capelli op.* p. 76.

A few instances out of a thousand that are produced by Allix, and Bp. Kidder in his demonstration of the Messiah, will explain and confirm this interpretation.

“ Genesis i. 27. Instead of *God created man*, it is in the Jerusalem Targum, *the word (Mimra) of the Lord created man*, i. e. (not the word, Logos, a distinct being, but) the Lord himself created man,

Gen.

terms. One of the articles of their creed is, “Credo perfecta fide, quod Deus Creator unus sit; quodque unitas talis qualis in eo est, in alio nemine reperiatur;” i. e. I believe with an intire faith, that God, the Creator, is One person, and that the unity or oneness which is in him is not in any other.

Buxtorf, who gives us this article of their faith, p. 3, in his account of their daily devotions, informs us—“They then go on to sing,—*And God shall be king over all the earth: In that day there shall be One*

Gen. ix. 12. “And God said, this is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you.” Onkelos paraphrases—*between* my word (my Mimra) and you, i. e. *myself* and you.

Exod. xx. 24. “For I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee.” The Jerusalem Targum has it, *my word* (my Mimra) shall appear to you and bless you—i. e. I myself.

Psalms cx. 1. “The Lord said unto my Lord.” The Chaldee paraphrast renders it, The Lord said *by his word*, his Mimra, i. e. by himself. Which sheweth, he did not rightly understand the words, as prophetically addressed to the Messiah, according to our Saviour’s own interpretation of it, Matth. xxii. 44; but thought it a strong asseveration made by God himself. *Kidder’s demonstration of the Messiah*, part iii. p. 108.

God,

God, and his name One, (Zachariah xiv. 9.) in like manner as it is written in thy law, *Hear, O Israel, God our God is one God.* This (continueth he) is so drawn up by them in opposition to the belief of Christians, as though we adored more Gods than one, or gave him more names than one, viz. that of Christ *."

Our Lord Jesus Christ himself uniformly and invariably taught this Jewish doctrine of the divine Unity. One is surprized how any could bring themselves to think he taught any other.

Language the most decisive is used by him to denote the singleness and unity of the object or person; *I, thou, he, him*; words, which in every other instance we appropriate to one, single person; and which, without confounding all language, are incapable of being applied to more than one.

* Buxtorf. *Synagoga Judaica*, p. 165.

Athanasius, writing against the Arians, owns that, on account of the doctrine of the Trinity, the heathens of that time charged Christians with holding many Gods themselves. Well then might the Jews so think of that doctrine, which he and others had framed.

Matthew xxii. 37, 38, he inculcates that first and great commandment of the law, referring no doubt to *Deuteron. vi. 4, 5*. “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.” And supreme affection cannot belong to two or more persons. We can but love *One* with *all* our heart.

Christ never referred the Jews to any other than the Lord God of their fathers, whose words he quotes to them, Matth. xxii. 32. *I am* the God of Abraham, &c. —Nor any other Creator than *he*, that One, whom Moses declared. Matth. xix. 4. *He* which made them at the beginning, made them male and female: and Mark. x. 6, From the beginning of the creation *God* made them male and female.

And Matth. iv. 10, he in the most decisive terms declares the *Lord God* to be *One person*, and singly, exclusive of all others, to be the sole object of worship; “Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and *him only* shalt thou serve.”

His disciples after him speak the same language.

St.

St. Paul declares to the Athenians,
 “ Whom ye ignorantly worship, *him* declare I unto you ; God that made the world—*he* is Lord of heaven and earth ; and now commandeth all men every where to repent ; because *he* hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world *by the man* whom *he* hath ordained ; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that *he* hath raised him from the dead.” Acts xvii. 23, &c.

See also the joint prayer of the apostles, Acts iv. 24.

It is related of father Paul, ^{No plurality of persons in} that he was once denounced to God. the office of the holy inquisition, for maintaining that no proof of the doctrine of the holy Trinity could be drawn from the first chapter of Genesis ; and that not being intimidated by the accusation, so as to retract his opinion, but persisting in it, and making his appeal to the inquisitor-general at Rome, he was acquitted*. What was not found to be heresy at Rome, 'tis hoped, will not be stigmatized as such

* Vita del Padre Paolo, p. 28.

here. Calvin warns his readers against such strained interpretations of scripture*; and many other learned men besides, who have defended the received doctrine from other passages of scripture, have rejected the kind of proof here brought, as too slender and precarious a foundation to rest such a doctrine upon it.

The state of the matter is this. The first words of the Bible are, “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” But the word used for God is *Elohim* or *Aleim* (as some write it) with a plural termination; and the verb *created* is singular, as though one should say in English *Gods hath* created; whence they would infer † the One God to be made up

* “Habetur apud Mosen Elohim, nomen pluralis numeri. Unde colligere solent hic in Deo notari tres personas. Sed quia parum solida mihi videtur tantæ rei probatio, ego in voce non insistam. Quin potius monendi sunt lectores, ut sibi à violentis ejusmodi glossis caveant.” *Calvin. Comment. in Gen. i. 1.*

† It would hence follow, that *Dagon*, the god of the Philistines, consisted of a *Trinity* or *plurality of persons*: for *Judges* xvi. 23, there is exactly the same construction as here, where, instead of our present translation----“Our *God hath* delivered Samson:”----

It

up of more persons than one, altho' of how many, whether three or more, cannot hence be determined.

But whoever knoweth aught of the Hebrew language, and will judge without prejudice, will perceive that there is no such thing to be inferred, nor any mystery at all couched under this construction of a verb singular with a nominative case plural, or the similar construction of a noun substantive of plural termination with an adjective singular, that language abounding with such irregularities.

It is in the Hebrew, “ Our *Gods* hath delivered Samson our enemy into our hand.”—In this way also a *Trinity* or *plurality of Gods* might be proved as well as a *Trinity* or *plurality of persons*, as they term it : for in some instances, not only the nominative case but the verb itself is plural—as 2 Sam. vii. 23—where we translate “ whom God went, or *hath gone* to redeem,” it is, in the Hebrew, *Gods have gone* to redeem. And so also in two other places, where also the One true God is spoken of, in Gen. xx. 13. xxxv. 7, but which cannot so well be made to appear in our language, where the singular and plural termination of the verb is the same. But in the French it is more evident—where, in the first instance—instead of *Dieu m’ a conduit*, it is in the Hebrew, *Dieux m’ ont conduit*; and in the latter, instead of *Dieu lui étoit apparu là*, it is in the Hebrew, *Dieux lui étoient apparu là*.

Thus

Thus Gen. xxxix. 3. "*his master* saw," is in the Hebrew, "*his masters bath* seen."

Gen. xlii. 30. "the man who is the Lord of the land, is—the man—the *Lords* of the land."

So Exod. xxi. 4. See also Prov. xxvii. 18. xxv. 13. Isaiah xix. 4.

And yet we do not conclude any plurality or mystery to be concealed here.

Instances of the like usage, are Psalm cxlix. 2. "let Israel rejoice in him that made him," is in the Hebrew, "rejoice in *his makers*."

Eccles. xii. 1. Remember thy Creator is, *thy Creators*.

Isaiah liv. 5. "thy maker is thine husband," is thy *makers*—thine *husbands*.

The septuagint translation * of the Bible, which was made before our Saviour's time,

* St. Jerom, who saw that the septuagint translation of the bible did by no means favour his Trinitarian notions, pretended, for he has no sort of authority for it, that the Jewish translators "believed the doctrine of the Trinity, but concealed it on purpose in their Greek translation, lest Ptolemy, who was a worshipper of the One true God, should suspect the Jews of holding a twofold divinity.

time, and most probably made use of and quoted occasionally by his apostles in the writings of the New Testament, constantly renders *Elohim* or *Aleim*, *Θεός*, God, when signifying the true God. And all other translations agree in rendering it in the singular number, considering its plural termination merely as an idiom of the Hebrew language, which makes use of the plural to give dignity to the person treated of. And on this account, other words in the same language, as *Adonaim*, *Baalim*, implying power, authority, and dignity, altho' of plural termination, are always of

“ divinity. And they were the more induced to it,
 “ (proceeds he) because it fell in with Plato's doctrine,
 “ trine,” (i. e. their notion of Christ being a *second*
God.) “ Lastly, says he, wherever the scripture as-
 “ serts any thing concerning the Father, Son, and
 “ Holy Ghost, they either gave a different turn to it,
 “ or passed it over in silence, out of complaisance to
 “ the king, and for fear of divulging too much the
 “ mystery of the faith.”

See Le Clerc's remarks on Jerom in his *Questiones Hieronymianæ*, p. 304—5. This slanderous device and apology of Jerom's shews how nearly their new-invented doctrine of the Trinity bordered upon the polytheism and idolatry of the heathens, when there was such danger of its being misconstrued and taken for it.

singular signification, when one subject or person is spoken of*.

Texts supposed
to favour a plu-
rality of persons
in God, or the
Trinity in U-
nity.

1 John v. 7, 8. For there are
three that bear record [*in hea-
ven; the Father, the Word, and
the Holy Ghost; and these three
are One.* And there are three that bear wit-

* Mr. Madan, in his late Scriptural Comment on the xxxix articles, p. 61, where we render Deut. vi. 4. “the Lord our God is one Lord”—he paraphrases.

“Jehovah (subsisting in) our Aleim (or plurality of persons) (is but) one Jehovah.”

According to this interpretation, what we read Deut. x. 17. “For the Lord your God is God of Gods—would be paraphrased, “*For the Lord, or Jehovah, subsisting in your plurality of persons, is plurality of persons of plurality of persons.*”

If any are pleased with such interpretations, they have a right to judge for themselves, but let them not condemn those who are content with what is plainer and less mysterious.

See some good remarks on this point in the appendix to “*An appeal to the common sense of all people, particularly the members of the church of England, with regard to an important point of faith and practice, imposed upon their consciences by public authority,*” first printed for Millar, 1753—a serious unanswerable work, and which has been useful in confirming many in the true Unitarian doctrine of the scriptures, *that the One God of Christians is the Father only.*

ness in earth,] the spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree in one.

The words here put in a parenthesis and different character, are not the genuine words of the apostle St. John *. The reasons for their not being genuine, are thus briefly summed up by Dr. Clarke †;

“ This passage was never cited by any of the numerous writers in the whole Arian controversy: nor ever cited at all by any Greek father, (in any genuine work) either before or after the council of *Nice*; though many of them quote the words immediately foregoing and following: nor by any of the *Latins*, before St. *Jerom*: the passage alleged by some out of *Ter-*

* “ Dr. Jortin calls it a *spurious text*, which is still maintained in bold defiance to the fullest and clearest evidence against it.” *Ecclesiastical history*, vol. iii. p. 100.

The famous Dr. Waterland gave it up as indefensible.

Luther and Bullinger, at the time of the reformation, omitted it in their German translations of the Bible.

† But whoever, as he observes, would see the whole matter learnedly and decisively discussed, may have recourse to *Mr. Emlyn's full enquiry into that text 1 John v. 7. with the defences of it.*

tullian, being plainly not the words of this text, but of that author himself; and the passage out of *Cyprian*, being only a mystical interpretation of the 8th verse; as is more than probable, as well from the express testimonies of *Eucherius* and *Facundus*, referred to by Dr. *Mills*, as from the text's being wanting in all, even the Latin copies, both before and long after *Cyprian's* time. And even in the first English Bibles after the reformation, in the time of *Henry* the Eighth, and *Edward* the Sixth, it was printed in a *different character*, to signify its being wanting in the original. Which distinction came afterwards to be neglected. And, as to *Greek manuscripts*, it has never yet been proved to be found in the text of *any one* of them, elder than the invention of printing.—*Scripture doctrine of the Trinity*, p. 231, 232.

Dr. Clarke in the same place well shews the sense of the apostle to be very complete without this passage.

“ *Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? This is he that came* (that was declared and manifested to be the Son of God)

God) *by water and blood* ; (*by water*, at his baptism, when there came a voice from heaven, saying, this is my beloved son :) and *by blood*, viz. by his death and resurrection :—and it is *the Spirit* (the gifts of the Holy Ghost, and the power of miracles granted to the apostles) *that beareth witness* ; *because the Spirit is truth*. *For there are three that bear record, the Spirit, the water, and the blood* ; and *these three agree in One* ; or, as some ancient writers read the text, *these three are one*, viz. *one testimony*, that Jesus is the Son of God.”

It is very remarkable, that this text, for which there is so little, or rather no authority at all, is the *only one* * *throughout*

* “ It is certain the common people have their eyes upon this, more than on any *undoubted text* in the Bible, in *this* controversy. And *so far* they must be deceived, *if it be spurious*. And it is in *your Lordships* and *the Clergy’s* power to let them know it, and to refer them to *other texts*, which you can assure them are genuine.

“ Nor is there any doubt to be made, but the people think some branches of the *liturgy* have their main foundation on *this one doubted text*. When they hear, *three persons and One God*, in the fourth petition of the

out the whole Bible that makes directly for the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity: all the other texts, that are brought for it, are only inferences from what is supposed to be implied in particular passages of scripture: but that three are one, the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, One, is no where else expressly or certainly declared.

litany; and, who with thee and the Holy Ghost ever liveth and reigneth One God, in the doxologies; they think nothing in the New Testament so like it as this dubious text. And will you not think it great pity, that your people should build so weighty things on such a slender foundation, if yourselves so judge it?

“ I speak this, because I know not any *other* text, that *directly* or *clearly* says the *same* thing, viz. that *the Father, Word, and Spirit, are One*. They are not joined in one *doxology*; nor indeed do I find any [*doxology*] given to the Holy Spirit in the New Testament, either *jointly* or *separately*; much less is the *Spirit* said to be *One with the Father and the Son*. I read of *One Spirit, One Lord, One God, and Father, Eph. iv.* but not that *these three are One*. And if there be no *other text* which says *this*, it is not the *more likely* to have been *St. John's* saying here; but the *more grievous* to have it inserted by any who had not his authority.”—*Mr. Emlyn's* (serious and affecting) *Address to both houses of convocation*, for the removal of *THIS text* out of our Bibles, vol. ii. p. 159, 160.

Matth.

Matthew xxviii. 19.

“ Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”

The apostles of our Lord, to whom he delivered this direction concerning baptism, could not conclude from any thing he had before taught them, that he intended by it any thing like what we call the doctrine of the *Trinity in Unity*. For he had taught them, that there was *One God*, the Father, “ and none other but *he*.” Mark xii. 42. He had taught them, that he himself was the Son of the Father, his messenger, and that he received his being, doctrine, authority, power, every thing from him. And he had constantly spoken to them of the Holy Ghost, as the Comforter or gift of God, by which he himself had been guided and assisted, John iii. 34. i. 33. Luke iv. 1. and which would be sent to supply his place when he left them, to assist and support them in preaching his gospel to all nations. John xiv. xv. xvi.

What then would they understand by this form of baptism, which we have made to contain such a mystery, but a compendious summary of the gospel which he had taught them *, and into which all men were to be initiated, and instructed?—That religion, which he received from *God, the Father*, which he *the Son* had preached, and which was to be confirmed and propagated by the miraculous powers of *the Holy Spirit*.

It does not appear from what the Lord Jesus had taught them, that they could make any other construction of this baptismal commission given to them: nor does it appear from any thing which they his apostles afterwards taught others, that they did in fact otherwise interpret it; much less infer from it a belief of a *Trinity in Unity*, or that *the Son and Spirit were each of them God no less than the Father, and equally to be worshiped*.

* Christianity is the religion of Christ; or that doctrine of religion, which God the Father taught by the Son, and confirmed by the Holy Ghost. Matthew xxviii. 19.—*Jefferies*, vol. ii. p. 309.

For

For we find, that when Philip baptized the great officer of the queen of Ethiopia, the confession of faith which he made, and with which Philip was satisfied, was, "*I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.*" Acts viii. 37. And this sheweth, that this was all the belief that was necessary to qualify for baptism in the apostles days.

And that no such stress was laid on this form of words as we seem to have laid on it, and that the apostles did not think themselves so tied up to it, but that baptism might be compleat without it, appears from many instances in the Acts of the apostles, and St. Paul's epistles. For, Acts ii. 38. Peter says, "be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ." And x. 48. He commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. xix. 15. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Romans vi. 3. Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death. Gal. iii. 27. For as many of you as have
been

been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ *.

After the Nicene council had pronounced baptism to be invalid that was not performed in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, flatly contrary to what appears to have been sometimes the practice of the apostles themselves, we find the advocates of that council much perplexed, how to save its credit in making such an unfortunate determination. But they soon found out this curious solution of the difficulty: the name—*Christ*, they said, i. e. the *Anointed* †, was itself a declaration of the whole Trinity, as it implied God the Father by whom the Son was anointed, the Son himself who was anointed, and the Spirit by which he was anointed, according to Acts x. 38, God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost. And thus indeed they made it out, that baptizing in the name of Christ might imply a declaration of the whole Trinity, as they called it; but not of such a Trinity as they

* Gataker—*Adversaria*, p. 29.

† Whitby—*Strict. Patrum in Act. Apostol.* p. 231, 232.

contended for, nor did they thereby clear the Nicene fathers of setting up their wisdom against that of the apostles.

But it is argued, that the Son and Holy Ghost being thus named together with the Father, and baptism being commanded to be celebrated alike in the name of all the three, the strict equality of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost to each other, may be thence inferred, and that therefore they are equally God, and equally to be worshiped.

The weakness of this inference is obvious from many parallel passages in the scriptures. 1 Tim. v. 21. "I charge thee, saith the apostle, *before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels*, that thou observe these things." The *angels* being here named along *with God and Christ*, shews, that when God is joined with other beings in the most solemn manner, no equality can be inferred from such a conjunction. So Sam. xii. 18. All the people *feared greatly the Lord and Samuel*. 1 Chron. xxix. 20. And all the congregation blessed the Lord God of their fathers, and bowed down their heads, and

worshipped the Lord and the king. See also Exod. xiv. 31. Judges vii. 18, 20. 2 Chron. xx. 20.

And 1 Cor. i. 15. with other like places, shews, that *baptizing in the name* of any one does not of itself imply any divinity in the person in whose name baptism is made.

In short, nothing can be concluded from the Son, and Holy Ghost being here joined with the Father, than what the scriptures elsewhere teach us concerning them; and in accord with what those scriptures teach us, we cannot better express the full meaning of *baptizing in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*, than in the paraphrase of Dr. Clarke, that it is “receiving to a profession of the belief, and an obligation to the practice of that religion, which *God the Father* has revealed and taught *by the Son*, and confirmed *by the Holy Ghost*.”

This interpretation of the baptismal form is confirmed by those summaries of Christian faith drawn up in the first ages after Christ, particularly that called the *apostles creed*; which, although not composed by them,

them, is acknowledged, the greatest part of it, to be of very early times.

Well had it been for our common Christianity, if these models, left us by the first believers, had been copied by those that came after them; and we had been content in our creeds and liturgies to speak of God, of Christ, and the Holy Ghost, with that modest reserve and regard for holy scripture, of which the compilers of those creeds and abstracts of our holy faith have set us the example. This *creed of the apostles*, however, did not escape censure in after times, but has been aspersed in most outrageous sort, as favouring the *Photinian*, or what is now called the *Socinian* heresy. And it must be owned, it does not favour the *Athanasian* doctrine of the Trinity, and approaches too near the holy scriptures to content those who are not satisfied to express their faith in scripture language.

Alphonfus de Vargas, a Spaniard, has given us at large the angry criticism, which some English and Spanish Jesuits passed upon this creed, and made public. As the book is rare, and the piece very curious

rious in its way, I shall produce a few sentences from the conclusion, and give the original in the margin.

“ *I believe in the Holy Ghost* *.

“ *This proposition is put with a bad design, and is deservedly to be suspected for*

* Credo in Spiritum Sanctum.

Hæc propositio maligne proposita est, et ex affectata brevitate merito suspecta haberi potest. Subdole enim Spiritus Sancti divinitatem, ejusque a patre et filio processionem tacet. Proinde Arianam hæresin redolet, schismati Græcorum oblique favet, individuanque Trinitatem dissolvit.

Itemque tota explicatio divinæ atque individuæ Trinitatis, octo istis articulis comprehensa, manca et periculosa est, avertitque fidelem populum a cultu et reverentia tribus divinis personis indivise atque inseparabiliter debita, et sub prætextu brevitatis et non necessariæ explicationis subdole totum Trinitatis mysterium evertit, cum tamen perfecta ejus et explicata fides medium sit ad salutem necessarium. Vixque tota hæc doctrina excusari potest a dolo, quod nullam de Filii aut Spiritus Sancti divinitate, aut etiam æternitate mentionem faciat, sed contrarium de Filio in articulo tertio insinuet.—*Alphonse de Vargas, Toletani, Relatio de stratagematis Jesuitarum*, p. 148, 149. 1642.

But these Jesuits were modest men compared with a brother of theirs, Father *Harduin*, almost in our own times. For he by one bold, crafty blow, annihilates at once the original scriptures of the Old and New Testament,

for its affected brevity. For it craftily passes over in silence the divinity of the Holy Ghost, and his proceeding from the Father and the Son. Moreover it smells grievously of the Arian heresy, covertly favoureth the schism of the Greeks, and destroys the undivided Trinity."

Testament, and all the authors and records of Pagan and Christian antiquity, six authors excepted, viz. *Plautus*, *Pliny* the elder, *Virgil's* nine eclogues and georgics, *Horace's* satires and epistles, *Homer's* iliad and odyssey, and the nine books of *Herodotus*; and reduces all faith and knowledge to the *vulgate Latin* translation of the Bible, and the supposed constant, living, and oral tradition of his church. All other writings he maintains to have been forged by a set of *Atheists* in the fourteenth century.

His society were forced *publicly* to disavow him, but he was to the last privately cherished by them. They well knew that ignorance was the mother of such devotion as they taught, and that the Roman catholic church, as they have modelled it, would better stand on the foot of tradition among themselves, than on the testimony of the original scriptures and fathers. And it must be owned, it was a noble *atheistical* effort to prop the tottering fabric of popery, and in an age less enlightened, and before the invention of printing, might have caused infinite mischief and confusion.—See *Joannis Harduini Jesuitæ ad censuram scriptorum veterum prolegomena*—with a learned preface.—For Vaillant, 1766.

“ And

“ *And the whole of this exposition of the divine and undivided Trinity, contained in these eight articles [viz. the apostles creed so divided] is defective and dangerous. For it takes the faithful off from the worship and reverence undividedly and inseparably to be paid to the three divine persons; and under a pretence of brevity and making no unnecessary enlargement, it cunningly overthrows the whole mystery of the Trinity, whereof the perfect and explicit belief is an indispensable condition of salvation. So that this whole doctrine, (namely, the apostles creed) can hardly be looked upon as any other than a cheat, because it maketh no mention of the divinity of the Son or Holy Ghost, or their eternity, but even insinuates the contrary concerning the Son in the third article, viz. who was conceived of the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary.*”

It must be confessed, that these Jesuits had some reason in their wrath; for nothing could more expressly condemn their doctrine of the *divine undivided Trinity* than this creed of the apostles; and hardly shall you meet with two greater opposites

sites, than this creed and that which goes under the name of Athanasius.

1 Cor. xii. 4, 5, 6.

Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God, that worketh all in all.

There seems nothing on the face of this passage of scripture, or on a comparison of it with any thing elsewhere spoken of the Son or Holy Spirit, to lead us to infer from it the doctrine of a Trinity in Unity, or the equality of any other being or person to God. It is, on the contrary, an express assertion of his prime over-ruling agency, and of his effecting all things in the Christian dispensation by the ministry of his Son and Holy Spirit.

The apostle's design, in this place, is to promote humility and peace; to prevent the Christians at Corinth from being elated on account of their own, or envious of the spiritual gifts of others. For the miraculous power, of itself, made no moral change in the man on whom it was conferred.

ferred. Without care and self-government, his dispositions might even be changed for the worse, by these extraordinary, as often happens with the ordinary blessings of Providence; and though made instrumental thereby to promote the salvation of others, he might forfeit his own.

He tells them then, 1. That there were different gifts of tongues, healing, &c. imparted to different persons; all of them equally good, because all proceeding from the *same Spirit or influence of God*, but the variety of them was bestowed for public utility, and not to generate strife and pride.

2. That there were different stations and offices in the church, the Christian society; viz. the people, and their ministers, the deacons and elders; but all were the appointment of the same Lord Jesus Christ, and in subjection to him. And,

3. There were different *ἐνεργήματα*, *inspirations*, degrees of inspiration: but all these extraordinary vouchsafements proceeded from, and were directed by the sovereign wisdom and power of God, who taught men by his Son, and bestowed these gifts on them by his Holy Spirit.

Clement,

Clement, whom St. Paul so highly commends, Phil. iv. 3. seems to have had this very passage in his eye in his letter to these same Corinthians; "Have we not (says he) *one God, one Christ.*" Is not *one spirit* of grace poured out upon us all? —*Wake's Apostolical Fathers*, p. 63.

The following is Athanasius's comment upon it, for which I am obliged to Dr. Clarke: "In the distribution of gifts, as the apostle writeth to the Corinthians, it is the same Spirit, it is the same Lord, it is the same God, which worketh all in all. For the Father himself, thro' the Word, by the Spirit, worketh and giveth all things;" i. e. as Dr. Clarke subjoins a little lower; "In plainer words, the meaning is, God does all things by his Son, and by his Spirit."—*Ser. Doct.* p. 227.

2 Corinth. xiii. 14.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all.

The Holy Ghost here signifies, either, 1. a divine person, a distinct intelligent agent, as some understand it: or, 2. the

gift of the Holy Ghost, *Acts* ii. 38. which Peter tells the Jews would be given them on their repenting and being baptized; viz. the miraculous powers then ordinarily conferred on believers : or it may signify any benefit or assistance which God bestows in answer to our prayers : compare *Matth.* vii. 11. with *Luke* xi. 13.

And the apostle bids farewell to his Corinthian brethren, by wishing them all the blessings of the gospel ; viz. the grace of Christ, the love of God which is the source of all, (*John* iii. 16.) and the gifts and assistances of the Holy Spirit. In short, it is a summary of the gospel method of salvation, much like the baptismal form (*Matth.* xxviii. 19.) above discussed, and can no more than that be brought to prove the doctrine of a Trinity in Unity, unless it be such a Trinity as this, namely, “ that the *One God and Father of all* governs and manages the world of Christians by the instrumentality of his Son, and Spirit.

These are the principal texts of the New Testament which are brought to establish the doctrine of a *Trinity in Unity*, of there being *three persons*, as they speak, in the
God-

Godhead, equal in power, severally God, and yet but One God; and upon which many parts of our liturgy, and particularly the invocations at the entrance of the *litany*, and the *Gloria Patri*, &c. are founded; a weak foundation, as hath been shewn, for such a building.

With regard to the last named *doxology*, I was much disappointed, and few will be satisfied with what the late Archbishop Secker argues in its behalf, and in defence of the exceeding frequent repetition of it in our church service.

“ At the end of this and each psalm (says he) that we repeat, of whatever nature it be, we add the same *doxology* that we used at first: i. e. *Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost: As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end: glory being due to God, for every thing he hath taught, and every thing he hath done, both in former times and present; and for every affliction as well as for every enjoyment. And therefore we do well to observe the apostle’s rule of “ giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Eph. v. 20*.*

* Abp. Secker’s posthumous works, vol. vi. p. 188.

Surely this was an unlucky oversight, to produce a text which, although injoining thanks to be given always for all things, yet tacitly condemns the practice of giving thanks to three persons, and ordereth thanks to be given *unto God and the Father only*, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Concerning this doxology, Dr. Lardner thus remarks. “ Doubtless this is said by many very frequently, and with great devotion. But can it be said truly? does not that deserve consideration? is there any such doxology in the New Testament? If not, how can it be said to have been *in the beginning*? Are not the books of the New Testament the most ancient and the most authentic Christian writings in all the world? It matters not much to inquire when this doxology was first used, or how long it has been used, if it is not in the New Testament*.”

The

* Lardner's letter on the Logos, p. 176. See also a fine passage, p. 169, 170, 171.

Some may be curious, however, to know when it first came into use. In the fourth century, after the council of Nice, there were great contentions about the form of their doxologies, those of holy scripture being

The law of God, given to the Jews by Moses, and often confirmed afterwards by the same divine authority, invariably taught the Unity of God, *Deut. vi. 4. Exod. xx. 2, 3, &c. &c.*

Religious worship to be paid to God, the Father only, and not to our Lord Jesus Christ.

In consequence of this, the Unity of his worship was most strictly enjoined, and inviolably to be observed.

Isaiah xlii. 8. “ I am the Lord ; that is my name : and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.” See also that fine prayer of King Solomon’s at the dedication of the temple; 2 Chron. vi. and the book of Psalms, &c.

being too plain and simple for the several contending parties. *Jerom* is then first said to have composed this versicle, *Glory be to the Father, &c.* at the request of *Pope Damasus* ; and at his request to have afterwards added the other, *As it was in the beginning, &c.* And the cause of this addition was, because, without it, *crafty heretics* might still have gone on with their blasphemy, in understanding the Son of God, not to have existed always with the Father, but to have had a beginning of existence.—*non semper cum Patre fuisse, sed a tempore coepisse.*—*Dallæus de cult. Lat. religioſ. p. 1193.*

If this be a true account, it must be owned, *that this famous doxology had but an unchristian and uncharitable origin.*

This being then the Mosaic law, that religious worship was to be appropriated to God, and incommunicable to any other person whatsoever, every Jew was bound to give divine honour to God, and could not give it to any other, without incurring the guilt of idolatry. Jesus, therefore, and his apostles were obliged by this law to worship no other being but God, unless it can be proved, that Christ, by his divine authority, or his apostles by his direction, did in any shape repeal it. But that they themselves conformed to it, and gave fresh sanctions to its authority, is now to be shewn.

Our Saviour Christ himself always prayed to God, the Father, *his Father and our Father, his God and our God.* John xx. 17.

Luke x. 21. "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth—even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight."

Luke xxii. 42. "Father, if thou be willing; (or, oh, that thou wouldst) remove this cup from me: nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done."

John xvii. throughout.

Our

Our Saviour Christ not only prayed himself but also directed prayer to be made *only to God, the Father.*

Luke xi. 1, 2. Matth. iv. 10. John xv. 16.

It were needless to multiply authorities for so plain a point.

Our Saviour Christ seems, in words as express as can be used, to forbid men's offering prayer to himself. John xvi. 23. In that day *ye shall ask me nothing: verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.*"

Hitherto he had been all along present with his disciples, as it were in God's stead in some respects, with a divine power to heal bodily diseases, to instruct in the divine will, to forgive sins, and to comfort and establish 'em in his faith. In consequence of which they had had recourse to him in all their wants and distresses, Matthew viii. 25. "Lord, save us, we perish."—Luke xvii. 5. "Lord, increase our faith."

—But as he was now soon going to be withdrawn from them, he acquaints them, that, when that event took place, they were no more to apply to him for any thing, but to *God, the Father, (the common Father*

ther

ther of him, and of them all) in his name, that is, as his disciples, relying on his authority, and in virtue of those assurances and promises from God which he had given them.

I shall need no apology for producing the following important and apposite passage from *Lactantius*.

“ When God saw the wickedness of men, and that the worship of false Gods prevailed over the whole earth, (for his own people the Jews had not been true to him,) he sent his Son on an embassy to men, to convert them from their various impious and false worships, to know and to worship him the true God, and also to turn them from folly to true wisdom, from iniquity to righteousness*. These are the ways

* Hæ sunt viæ Dei, in quibus ambulare eum præcepit. Hæc præcepta, quæ servanda mandavit. Ille vero exhibuit Deo fidem: docuit enim quod unus Deus sit; eumque solum coli oportere; nec unquam seipsum Deum dixit: quia non servasset fidem, si missus, ut Deos tolleret, et unum assereret, induceret alium præter unum. Hoc erat, non de uno Deo facere præconium; nec ejus, qui miserat, sed suum proprium negotium gerere; ac se ab eo, quem illustratum venerat, separare. Propterea, quia tam fidelis

ways of God, in the which he commanded him (his Son) to walk. These the precepts, which he gave him to keep. And he was faithful to God. For he taught, that God is One: that he only is to be worshipped: *Nor did he ever say that he himself was God*; because he would not have been found faithful, if when sent to destroy the worship of many Gods, and assert the worship of One alone, he had brought in another besides that One. This would not have been preaching the One God, and doing the work of him that sent him, but his own work, and withdrawing himself from Him whom he came to declare. And because he was so faithful, and assumed nothing to himself, intent only on fulfilling the commands of him that sent him; therefore he was rewarded with the dignity of an everlasting high-priest, the honour of a supreme king, the authority of a judge, and the name (or title) of God."

delis extitit, quia sibi nihil prorsus assumpsit, ut mandata mittentis impleret; et sacerdotis perpetui dignitatem, et regis summi honorem, et judicis potestatem, et Dei nomen accepit."--*Lactantius de vera sapientia et religione*, l. iv. p. 198.

One would hardly think it possible, by any device, to evade and set aside the force of our Saviour Christ's own example, and express precept of offering worship and prayer to the One God, the Father only. But nothing is too hard to be got over by those, who have once warmly espoused a religious system, and are unwilling to relinquish it. Hence it has been ingeniously invented by some, though without any authority from holy scripture, that the word *Father*, besides signifying the first person of the Trinity, as they speak, does also stand for the divine essence or nature, comprehending the whole Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and that therefore, when Christ prays, or bids us pray to the Father, he is to be understood of prayer to the whole Trinity. But what a chain of absurdities and contradictions follows from such a supposition?

1. It would be making our blessed Saviour, whenever he prayed to the Father, pray to himself.

2. To use Bishop Pearson's words—"if the Son were included in the Father, then were the Son the Father of himself. *Exposition of the Creed*, p. 32. And,

3. Dr.

3. Dr. Clarke (*reply* to Mr. Nelson, p. 237.) shews another strange consequence of such a supposition. “ If, saith he, the word *God*, which always signifies an intelligent and powerful agent, were ever made use of in Scripture to signify what this learned author calls the *divine nature*, viz. *the whole three persons*, who are each of them also in scripture always spoken of as intelligent agents; it would follow unavoidably, that the *divine nature* was a *fourth intelligent agent*, distinct from, and constituted of those three intelligent agents. Which is the utmost confusion imaginable.”

It is from this confused language concerning the Deity, and a worship no less confused grounded upon it, that Christians have been charged with holding *four Gods*.

The *four invocations* at the beginning of the litany, can but ill be defended against such a charge.

Our Lord’s apostles, as may be presumed, were far from going contrary to their divine Master’s practice and directions on this most important article of worship.

They direct men to pray to God only.
Romans xv. 6, 30. Phil. i. 3, 4, 6. Col. iii. 16, 17. Eph. v. 19, 20, &c. &c.

They

They prayed only to God themselves,
 Acts iv. 24, 30. Rom. i. 8. xvi. 27. 1
 Tim. i. 17, &c. &c.

Christ's character
 of Mediator and
 High - Priest ut-
 terly incompati-
 ble with his being
 the object of wor-
 ship.

But that language concern-
 ing our Saviour Christ, which
 his apostle Paul in particular
 makes use of, i. e.—styling
 him *the Mediator*, 1 Tim.

ii. 5. *giving thanks and glory to God through
 him and by him*, Rom. i. 8. vii. 25. Eph.

iii. 21. and above all, his calling him *our
 high-priest*, in allusion to the office of the
 Jewish high-priest, so largely insisted on
 in the epistle to the Hebrews, must for
 ever exclude the thought and practice of
 making him the object of religious wor-
 ship.

Heb. iv. 15. v. 7, 8. His peculiar fit-
 ness for this office of high-priest is de-
 scribed, as *he was a man, tempted in all
 points like as we are, yet without sin*, iv. 15.
 v. 7, 8.

His admission into this office at his re-
 surrection, v. 5.

And he is now in heaven actually sus-
 taining that character, whatever it be,
 ministering to God, and acting for us, iv.

14. vii. 24, to the end. viii. 1, 2, 3, 4.
ix. 11, 12, &c. &c.

He cannot therefore be the God, to whom prayer is to be offered, when he is the high-priest of that God, his minister, *to appear in the presence of God for us*, ix. 24.—*to make intercession for us*, vii. 25. What a strange thing would it have been for the Jews to have worshiped Aaron their high-priest, instead of the great Jehovah, whom Aaron served? The idea exhibited to us of our Redeemer in this epistle is this, and it is full of consolation; that, by his love and friendship for us, joined to his power and interest with God, and the divine promises by him, we are encouraged to ask of God in prayer the supply of all our wants; and are therefore exhorted *to come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.* Hebr. iv. 16.

But different conclusions having been formed from other parts of the writings of the apostles and evangelists, and a very contrary practice founded thereupon for many ages, we must consider how far it is really warranted by them.

The principal
texts alledged
to authorize
prayer to our
Lord J. Christ.

Acts i. 24. *And they prayed,
and said, Thou Lord, which
knowest the hearts of all men,
shew whether of these two thou
hast chosen.*

This prayer is addressed to God, the Father, and not to Christ. 1. Because in a similar passage that follows soon after, the same apostles address their prayer in the same terms to God, the Father, Acts iv. 24, 29. “*Lord, thou art God—and now, Lord, behold their threatenings, and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word.*” 2. For the reason given by *Grotius* upon the place, who quotes Jeremiah xvii. 10. “*I the Lord search the heart;*” and observes, that it is the prerogative of God only to search the heart of man. It may be said, that, Rev. ii. 23. Christ saith of himself, “*I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts.*” But then, this is a derived power, as plainly appears from the frequent acknowledgments of his receiving every thing from God, and particularly, Matth. xxviii. 18. “*All power is given me in heaven and in earth*” i. e. bestowed upon him,

him, and intrusted with him, for the government of his church, but not surely to erect him into an equal object of worship with God, who *gave* it him.

Acts vii. 59. Our translation has inserted the word God, when it was not in the original, as is easily perceived by its being put in *italics*. Mr. Purver translates, " Thus they stoned Stephen, who was calling on (invoking) and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!"

Unquestionably Stephen made this request, addressed this prayer to the Lord Jesus. But this can be no precedent for directing prayer to him *unseen*, or addressing him as God, whom the blessed martyr declares *he saw with his eyes*, and calls him, v. 56. " the son of man standing on the right hand of God;" calls him *the Son of man*, in that his highest state of exaltation. *Son of man, and God most high: what a space between?*

Revelation i. 5, 6.

Unto him that hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

The very different readings of this disturbed passage in the MSS. shew that it has suffered by the negligence of transcribers, which may easily be observed in Mill, and Wetstein; and therefore no certain conclusions can be formed from it.

“ Dr. Mill observes (saith Dr. Clarke, Scr. Doct. p. 146, 147.) that, in one ancient Greek manuscript, the words *unto him* are wanting; the reading being, τῷ ἀγαπήσαντος καὶ λύσαντος, instead of τῷ ἀγαπήσαντι καὶ λύσαντι: in which case the doxology will be, not to Christ, but the Father; and the passage would be read—
 “ And from Jesus Christ, (who is the faithful witness, the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth) *who hath loved us*, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.”

Revelation v. 13.

Blessing and honour, &c. be unto him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb, for ever and ever.

This is to be understood in the same way as Acts vii. 59. The blessing and honour is tendered to the object present and visible: and *not upon the throne*, but standing in the midst, verse 5. or before the midst of the throne.

throne. The reason also, which is assigned for this worship being paid him, shews he cannot be an object of worship equal to the Supreme; namely, v. 12. his being *the Lamb slain*, and therefore *worthy*, i. e. spotless innocence, perfect virtue and goodness, tried and confirmed by sufferings.

The ascribing *glory* and *honour* to Christ, does in no degree imply him to be God, or authorize the worship of him, or prayer to him. It is no more than a declaration of our reverence of him, and high esteem of his most perfect moral character and goodness. We may, therefore, and we ought on all proper occasions to join with his apostle in saying, 2 Peter iii. 18. "*To him be glory both now and for ever.*"

1 Tim. i. 12.

I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry.

This is no address of thanks to Christ as an object of worship, but a sudden emotion of gratitude in the apostle's mind, and expression of his thankfulness to Christ for his own miraculous conversion (Acts ix.), and call to be an apostle.

2 Corinth. i. 3. Rom. i. 7.

Grace to you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Theff. iii. 11. *Now God himself even our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you.* 2 Theff. ii. 16.

These, and other the like passages, are only pious wishes, not prayers. That this is the true interpretation, and not mere assertion, appears from *Rev.* i. 4. Otherwise it may as well be said, that the writer prays to the *seven spirits* there named, which are afterwards in the same book, v. 6. called the *Lamb's eyes*, i. e. Christ's angels, messengers, *sent forth into all the earth.*

2 Cor. xii. 8. *For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.*

St. Paul appears here to have directed his prayer to God, the Father; and to have had in his thoughts, and imitated our Lord's prayer in the garden, the night before his sufferings, when he prayed three times to God, that, if it pleased him, the cup of affliction might pass away from him, without his drinking it. *Beausobre* on the place.

N. B. The apostles were not so exact in the use of the words, *Lord, Saviour*, and the like, which they indifferently gave both to God and to Christ; never supposing that any would mistake their Lord and master, so lately born and living amongst men, to be the supreme God, and object of worship.

Dr. Hammond thus paraphrases, “and I earnestly *prayed to God* to be delivered from it.”

1 Corinth. i. 2. *With all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Dr. Hammond rightly observes, that it should be translated—“With all them that are called by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

“In the style of scripture, *to be called by the name of any one*, or *to have the name of any one called upon it*, signifies to belong, to be the property, or to be in subjection to that, whose name is called upon the other.”

Daubuz on Rev. p. 130.

But see in Dr. Clarke (*Scr. Doct.* No. 691.) an enumeration of the various senses in which this phrase *calling on the name of Christ*, and some like it, are used; among which there is none that implies directly *invoking* him, but Acts vii. 59. which has been considered.

Rev. xxii. 20. *Come, Lord Jesus !*

These words are only the reply of the apostle, addressed to the Lord Jesus *present with him* in the vision ; who had said immediately before, “ I come quickly.”

Matth. xviii. 20.

For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

It may be proper to take notice of this text, though out of its course, lest we should pass by any thing of consequence on the argument.

The following seems to be a valuable explication of it.

“ If we consider the whole of this passage, in which our Lord is speaking of the great power of which his apostles should be possessed, and especially of the efficacy of their prayers, we shall be satisfied, that he could only mean by this form of expression, to represent their power with God, when they were assembled as his disciples, and prayed as became his disciples, to be the same as his own power with God ; and God heard him always. That our Lord could not intend to speak of himself as the *God who heareth* prayer, is evident from his speaking of the
Father

Father in this very place, as the person who was to grant their petitions." ver. 19*.

Le Clerc, in his harmony, seems to have had somewhat of the like thought. "Where two or three," &c. "it will be the same as if I was amongst them, and praying to God along with them †."

Melancthon, in a letter to *Camerarius*, in 1532, after a prediction which hath since been but too much verified, of the disputes and disturbances that would arise some time or other about the Trinity, thus concludes upon the subject; "I take refuge in those plain declarations of scripture, which injoin prayer to Christ, which is to ascribe the proper honour of divinity to him, and is full of consolation ‡."

* Familiar illustrations of certain passages of scripture — printed for Johnson, Paul's Church-yard, 1772, p. 26, 27.

† — ipse inter eos esse, et Deum conjunctim cum iis orare censebor. *Clerici harm. evangel.*

‡ "Ego me refero ad illas scripturæ voces, quæ jubent invocare Christum, quod est ei honorem divinitatis tribuere, et plenum consolationis est."

Benson's account of Servetus, p. 165, note.

Observe here, 1st. that this eminent person thought, and justly as it should seem, that prayer is the highest act of worship, the proper honour of God, and peculiar to him alone. And, 2. that the principal argument for Christ's divinity was to be fetched from religious worship and prayer being addressed to him. If there be therefore no authority for the latter, as we have shewn there is not, the other falleth of course.

But one argument of another kind is to be considered.

Of Christ's high power and authority as a ground of worship.

That the Lord Jesus is intrusted with a mighty extensive power and dominion for the good of his church and people, is plainly and expressly revealed to us. Matth. xxviii. 18, 20. John xiv. 14. Eph. i. 22. 23. 1 Cor. xv. 24. Philip. ii. 9, 10. &c. &c.

How and in what manner he exerciseth this power is wholly unrevealed, and therefore unsearchable by us, as much as the way and manner of God's providence, under which Christ acteth, and which superintends and over-rules all things.

To many, however, this high trust from God, and vast power and dominion have seemed

seemed sufficient to warrant prayer to the Lord Jesus, although he be not the supreme God. But this ground of invocation seems over-turned,

1. By what hath been above shewn, that Christ directed prayer to be made only to God, the Father, and forbad it to himself.

2. There is no authority for it in the writings of the apostles.

3. It is setting up an inferior object of worship without warrant, when God invites and commands us to address ourselves upon all occasions immediately to himself, and he is able to do more abundantly for us than any other being, though ever so great and perfect.

4. It is destroying the proper office of Christ as mediator, high priest, and intercessor.

5. It distracts the mind of the worshiper, who will be in doubt and uncertainty, when to pray to God, when to Christ, when it is right, when amiss to do it : a state of mind, surely, that ought to have no place in so important a duty.

Love, honour, reverence, duty, confidence, gratitude, and obedience are, and will

will be certainly for ever due from us of mankind, to the Lord Jesus for his immense love to us, and on account of his perfect holiness, excellency, power, dignity, and dominion: but religious worship is the incommunicable honour and prerogative of God alone.

Some of the first Socinians maintained, that Christ, although no more than a man invested with divine powers, was to be prayed to and worshiped. And there is extant a dispute on the subject between *F. Socinus* himself, and *Francis Davides*, superintendant of the Socinian churches in *Transylvania*, who opposed the invocation of Christ. The latter died in prison, in consequence of this opinion of his, and some offence taken at his indiscreet propagation of it from the pulpit. I wish I could say, that *Socinus* or his friend *Blandrata*, had done all in their power to prevent his commitment, or procure his release afterwards *.

* The following little history of a contrary behaviour, being not commonly known, and shewing the excellent person to whom it relates in a most amiable point of view, will be acceptable to some. “ *Dr. Clarke*, a short time before his death, began his solicitations

Mosheim has some remarks on this dispute, which it is but fair to produce, and they will not take us out of our way. “ It is worthy of observation, that the motive which engaged *Socinus* and his friends to bestow so much pains and labour in the suppression of this faction, was not a persuasion of the pernicious tendency of its doctrines, or peculiar notions. On the contrary, *Socinus* himself acknowledges, that this controversy turns upon matters of very little importance, by declaring it as his opinion, that praying or offering up divine worship to Christ is not necessary to salvation. Thus, in his answer to *Wujeck*, he expresses himself in the following manner :

tations at court for the releasement of Mr. *Woolston*, declaring that he did not undertake it as an approver of his doctrines, but as an advocate for that liberty which he had through his life defended. He looked on Mr. *Woolston* as one under persecution for religion, which he thought inconsistent with the liberties of England, and the doctrines of Christianity : And on this laudable principle *Dr. Clarke* solicited the relief of the oppressed, but was hindered from proceeding in his virtuous design by death, soon after Mr. *Woolston*’s commitment.”—*Life of Mr. Woolston*, p. 18.

The Christian, whose faith is so great as to encourage him to make his addresses habitually and directly to the Supreme Being, and who standeth not in need of the comfort that flows from the invocation of Christ his brother, who was tempted in all things like as he is, that Christian is not obliged to call upon the name of Jesus by prayer or supplication. According therefore to the opinion of Socinus, those who lay aside all regard to Christ as an intercessor *, and address themselves directly to God alone, have a greater measure of faith than others. But if this be so, why did he oppose with such vehemence and animosity the sentiment of *David*, who in effect did no more than exhort all Christians to address themselves directly and immediately to the Father. From all this then it appears manifest, that *Socinus* and his followers were more artful

* Seldom is it that we can fairly represent the opinions of those who differ from us on religious points. Unless Christ's *making intercession* for us, be *strangely* supposed to authorize and encourage prayer to him, certainly *Socinus* did the more establish Christ's character as *intercessor*, by recommending and preferring prayer that was made to God alone.

than ingenuous in their proceedings with respect to *Dauides*. They persecuted him and his followers, lest, by tolerating his doctrine, they should increase the odium under which they lay, and draw upon themselves anew the resentment of other Christian churches, while in their private judgment they looked upon this very doctrine, and its professors, as worthy of toleration and indulgence *."

Archbishop Tennyson's reproof of these elder Socinians, for their inconsistency in holding such a doctrine as this of praying to Christ, whom they took to be only a man indued with divine power, is very observable; and points out the wrongness of praying to him at all, if he be not the supreme God.

"To say that Christ is a creature, yet made such a God who can hear all prayers, supply all wants, give all graces needful to his body the church, know all the secrets of all thoughts not directed to him, govern and judge with wisdom all the world, and to worship him under this divine notion; what is it else than paying an homage to a

* Mosheim, vol. iv. p. 200—note.

presumed creature, which is due only to the One very God! For what apprehensions greater than these do we entertain concerning the true God, when we call upon him, confide in him, or revere him * ?”

The opinion and practice of the ancient Christians, before the council of Nice, has been often shewn from their writings, and will hereafter be pointed out. But I cannot better close this head, than with a passage out of *Origen de Orat.* p. 48. which I remember not to have seen cited by any one.

“ *But if we would learn, says that excellent person, what prayer is, we must take care not to pray to any creature; no not even to Christ himself; but to the God and Father of the Universe alone: to whom this Our Saviour himself offered up his prayers, as we have shewn before; and also teacheth us to offer up ours, for being once asked, teach us to pray, (Luke xi. 1.) he teacheth not to pray to himself, but to the Father, saying, Our Father who art in heaven, &c.*”

Religious worship
to be paid to God
the Father, and not
to the *Holy Ghost*.

I find not any example of
prayer to the Holy Ghost, or
Holy Spirit, as the third per-

* Tennison of idolatry, chap ix. p. 174.

son in the Trinity, as it is called, either in the scriptures of the Old or New Testament; or any countenance given to such a practice.

But it is most singular and remarkable, that St. Paul's epistles in particular, and those of the other apostles, commonly begin with devout wishes of *blessings from God, and from the Lord Jesus Christ*; but *the Holy Spirit is never named at all* at such times: as in the following instances: Rom. i. 7. 1 Cor. i. 3. 2 Cor. i. 2. Gal. i. 3. Eph. i. 2. Phil. i. 2. Coloss. i. 2. 1 Theff. i. 1. 2 Theff. i. 1. 1 Tim. i. 2. 2 Tim. i. 2. Tit. i. 4. Philem. i. 3. 2 Pet. i. 2. 2 John i. 3. It is also farther to be noted, that in the *Revelation of St. John*, where we have several representations of the worship paid by the Christian church, and the inhabitants of the heavenly world, we have no mention there made of the *Holy Spirit*, as a distinct agent, person, or object of worship, but the whole is directed to God, with *blessing and honour, &c. to the lamb that was slain*, v. 12.

These omissions must strike a serious observer. They had such an effect upon one person, as to convince him of the utter wrongness of the received doctrine concerning the Holy Spirit.

Spirit. “ It cannot be, said he, if the Holy Spirit be a person, and God equal to the Father, that he should be thus passed by, and left out unnoticed by the apostles of Jesus.”

“ The only text that can be said directly to favour prayer to the Holy Spirit, is 2 Cor. xiii. 8. *the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all.* But to what hath been above suggested concerning this text, I take the liberty to add what is said by an able writer, in answer to one who had brought this as a proof of prayer being made to the Holy Ghost.

“ The text contains but a pious wish of spiritual gifts; and it may as well be said, when St. Paul writes, Col. iv. 18. Hebr. xiii. 25. *Grace be with you all,* that it is a prayer made to *Grace*. And therefore, if the Holy Ghost never be *called God*; be never prayed to in scripture; if we are never called the *servants*, nor *church*, nor *kingdom*, nor *people* of the Holy Spirit; if never required to pray, nor give thanks, nor praise to the Holy Spirit (but to God, for and by his Spirit) and only are bid to be guided by, and not to quench, nor grieve the Spirit; as may be said also of our own conscience :

if

if so, then what ground is there for all these inferences of prayer and giving thanks for all to the *Holy Ghost*, and joining him with the Father in all our devotions? If any such things might justly be inferred from Christian principles, surely the apostles were as much concerned as any to make such inferences, and to have put them in practice for our imitation *."

The practice of Christians for a long time was in strict conformity with the holy scriptures on this point. We do not find; that the *Holy Ghost* was admitted into the Christian church, as a separate and distinct person of the Deity, until after some ages had passed over. Not in the year 325, at the time of composing the Nicene creed: for that part (*the Lord and giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father, who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, who spake by the prophets*) which we have now adopted into the Nicene creed, was not originally in it, but an addition made to it at the latter end of the fourth

* Emlyn, vol. ii. p. 447, 448.

century, at the second council of Constantinople †.

Some would account for this general silence of the early fathers, by alleging, that the distinct Deity of the *Holy Spirit* was not opposed before the time of *Macedonius*, on whose account the council at Constantinople was held, and therefore not particularly specified. The real truth is, it was never in their thoughts. They had hitherto satisfied themselves with the plain language and doctrine of the scripture itself, which we have seen does not favour such a strange worship. “ And what is a farther proof of this, the ancient fathers, when they mention the objections of the heathens on this subject, (viz. of Christians holding more Gods than One) do not speak of them as le-

† This addition to the Nicene creed, made at the second general council of Constantinople, was confirmed by that of Ephesus which followed, when it was decreed unlawful to make any additions to it. And yet, not long after, Pope Nicholas the first added *and the Son*, (so that the creed became as we now read it, *who proceedeth from the Father and the Son*) which was the cause of schism betwixt the Greek and Latin church, which continues to our time.—*Pearson on the creed*, note, p. 325, 326.

velled

velled against the notion of *three Gods*, but of *two* only ; whereas, if the notion of the divinity of the *Holy Ghost* had been then fashionable, they would have made the same objection as is now made by Jews and Mohammedans ; not against *two* Gods, but against *three*."

"I shall only quote *Lactantius*, *Inst.* l. iv. c. xxix. "Here some may perhaps ask, how the Christians profess to worship but One God, yet we seem to believe and hold *two* Gods, God the Father, and God the Son. This doctrine hath been a great stumbling-block to many, who confess, that in other points of doctrine we speak what is probable, and fit to be embraced ; but in this they think we stumble, that we hold a *second God*, and him also a mortal one, as one who could die *."

The *Unitarian* doctrine therefore is no novelty ; namely, *that religious worship is to be addressed only to the One true God, the Father.*

* *Ben Mordecai*—letter i. note, p. 107. where, and also throughout the whole work, may be found a great deal of important information concerning this point, and the subject of these papers.

For it was the doctrine our blessed Saviour taught, and always practised ; and his apostles after him : and it was also the universal practice of the Christian church, with little or no variation, for the first three centuries.

Mons. Jurieu saw this, and fairly owned it ; but then he maintained, in his sixth pastoral letter, that the mystery of *a Trinity of persons in the same essence*, was not understood or fully explained, till the two councils of Nice and Constantinople had moulded it into its right shape and form, and settled it, towards the end of the fourth century. This, however, is a method of defending this doctrine which few will openly adopt, as it must deprive them of the assistance of the whole list of the primitive Fathers : and yet it is an unquestionable fact, that they were utterly unacquainted with it.

The learned Bishop Bull's sentiments on this point will have weight with those who know that his prejudices leaned another way. And he confesses,

“ In the *first and best ages*, the churches of Christ directed all their prayers, according
to

to the scripture, to God only, thro' the alone mediation of Jesus Christ.'—*Bishop Bull's answer to the Bishop of Meaux.*

And, in another place; "It is to be observed, that in the Clementine liturgy, (so called,) which is by the learned, on all hands, confessed to be very ancient, and to contain the order of worship observed in the churches before the times of Constantine;—*all the prayers are directed to God, in the name of his Son Jesus Christ.*"—*Bishop Bull's discourse concerning the existence and nature of angels* *.

It was a great unhappiness and oversight, that when our forefathers shook off the yoke of the Bishop of Rome, they retained so much of the Roman ritual, its creeds, and forms of worship; and that, as the compilers of the liturgy, in the office for ordaining priests; exhort *continually to pray to God the Father, by the mediation of our only Saviour Jesus Christ, for the heavenly assistance of the Holy Ghost*; that this direction of worship to its proper object, was not uni-

* Dr. Clarke—*Scrip. Doct.* p. 435.

versally adhered to by themselves, as it ought to have been.

The litany, more than any other of the offices of devotion in our church, seems to deviate most widely from this rule of Christian worship, and to require a total reformation. For in this,

1. *God, the Father of heaven*, is invoked.

2. Then follow three several invocations of *God the Son*, *God the Holy Ghost*, and the *Holy Trinity*. All three directly contrary to what Bishop Bull above declares to have been the practice of the church in the first and best ages, and the rule of the holy scriptures.

3. Next follow several addressees to Christ *by himself*. And after that,

4. “ We sinners do beseech thee to hear us, *O Lord God*,” would seem to be directed to God the Father.

5. Then, after a certain space, follow many invocations of the Son, as *Lamb of God*, *Christ*, *Lord*, &c.

6. Then we turn off all at once, and address ourselves to the Father.

7. Then

7. Then we return again to the Son, and renew our address to him in several invocations.

8. Presently after we go back, and say, *We beseech thee, O Father.* And,

9. In the very next address, as placed in this office, we resume our devotions once more to Christ, in the prayer of St. Chrysostom *.

Is there any thing in holy scripture to countenance this variety of address, and shifting and changing from one object of worship to another? Can this in any shape be construed into a right worship of the *One* infinite eternal *Mind*, the wise and good Parent of the universe?

* See *Candid Disquisitions*, p. 324, 325.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CAUSES OF THE UNHAPPY DEFECTION, AMONG
CHRISTIANS, FROM THE SIMPLICITY OF RELI-
GIOUS WORSHIP PRESCRIBED IN THE SCRIPTURES
OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

RAPID and astonishing was the pro-
gress and success of the gospel of Je-
sus, at its first preaching, in converting
multitudes in all countries of the known
world, from idolatry and vicious impure
practices to the acknowledgment of the
One true God, and a holy life and conver-
sation. But the cause was adequate to the
effect. The presence of a divine power,
manifested by frequent miracles, which ac-
companied the humble and self-denying
preachers of a religion so pure and rational;
the full assurance of pardon to guilty mor-
tals, of being received into the especial fa-
vour and protection of God, in passing thro'
this scene of trial and suffering, and the
animating prospect of life and immortality
at the close of it: these were motives, which
indeed have now too much lost their power,
by being familiar to us, and therefore less
regarded,

regarded, but which could not be resisted at first where men would pay any attention, and had not lost all sobriety of mind, and love of truth and virtue. The common people, and the unlearned, who had no speculative prejudices to interfere, would readily and naturally fall in with, and embrace the belief and doctrine of the One living and merciful God, the common Creator and Preserver, and of Jesus, a divine messenger, prophet, and saviour, sent by him to men, in all that purity and simplicity with which the apostles delivered it.

But the philosophic minds of others who were brought to believe in Christ, in an age so curious and inquisitive as that was, would not so soon shake off the learned notions they prized so highly, and had acquired with so much ingenious labour, but would be induced in some sort to fashion their new religion by them. And this actually came to pass. *Science, falsely so called*, as the apostle speaks, 1 Tim. vi. 20. first corrupted Christianity, and led men into errors concerning the person and true character of our Saviour Christ; and the learned converts from heathenism were they that laid the

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the foundation of the Nicene, Constantinopolitan, and scholastic Trinity, as of many other unscriptural doctrines. So that to know and to worship God aright, we have only to abandon the language and ideas of a false philosophy, and revert to the pure and simple teaching and directory of the word of God.

St. Paul saw these fatal errors in the bud, and endeavoured to warn men of them, and prevent their growth. Coloss. ii. 8. 1 Tim. 6. 20. Acts xx. 30, &c.

But the apostle John lived long enough to behold and lament the unhappy fruits that were grafted on this bad stock. For his first epistle, written at a very advanced age, is chiefly levelled against a sect of philosophic Christians, which had already sprung up in Asia where he abode, who had imported from their philosophy this strange notion, that the Lord Jesus was not a man in *reality*, but in *appearance* only, i. e. a phantom; and hence they had the name of Δοκῆται, docetæ, phantasmatici, *phantomists*. Offended at the meanness of our Saviour's birth and outward condition, and his suffering to death on the infamous cross of wood;

wood ; and full of Plato's sublime speculations, or rather of the Orientalists, from whom Plato had borrowed them, they maintained, that besides the τὸ ὄν, τ'ἀγαθόν, *the self-existent Being, perfectly good*, there were many emanations of intelligences from him ; and the first and chief of these, νοῦς, λόγος, mind, reason, wisdom, a *second God* ; and they took the Lord Jesus, whom the apostles preached, *the Son of God*, to be this first emanation from God, which their philosophy had taught them.

Another branch of their doctrine was, that *matter* was in itself dark, evil, impure. They could not therefore allow that a pure emanation of Deity, such as they presumed Christ to be, could have any connection with so impure a substance as a human material body, and so they invented this solution of the difficulty, that he was *man in appearance only*, and *not in reality* *.

* Histoire critique de Manichée, et du Manichéisme. Par M. de Beausobre, tom. i. p. 378, 379.

Cotelier, in his notes on the epistle of Ignatius to the Romans, p. 24. well says, " A man may as soon deny that the sun shines at bright noon, as that the docetæ, or phantomist heretics, did not spring up in the very days of the apostles." The good old apostle, St. John's letters are pointed continually at this innovation in the doctrine of his divine master. " Every spirit that confesseth that *Jesus Christ is come in the Flesh*, is of God. And every Spirit that *confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh*, is not of God.—For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that *Jesus Christ is come in the flesh*. This is a deceiver, and an antichrist." 1 John iv. 2, 3. 2 John 7. See also 1 John iv. 14, 15. v. 1. 5, 6, 7. i. 1. 19, 20, 22.

This is also the principal error combated by the apostolic fathers. There is a very striking passage of this sort in *Ignatius ep. ad. Trall.* which I shall quote in Archbishop Wake's translation.

" Stop your ears, therefore, as often as any one shall speak contrary to Jesus Christ, of the race of David, by the Virgin Mary. Who was *truly* born, and did eat and drink;

was

was *truly* persecuted under Pontius Pilate ; was *truly* crucified, and dead, both the things in heaven, and the things on earth, and the things under the earth, being conscious of it. Who was also *truly* raised from the dead by his Father, after the same manner as he [the Father] will also raise us up who believe in him, by Christ Jesus ; without whom we have no true life." p. 151.

We cannot wonder, that the spirit of this pious father, and faithful martyr of Christ, was stirred up against those dogmatizing speculatists, who, by the wild fancies of their metaphysical philosophy, annihilated the gospel and the holy example of Jesus, and turned the whole into a kind of mystical fairy transaction.

Irenæus often confutes these men, and has one whole chapter expressly *against those who held Christ's appearance to have been imaginary and not real*, and remarks that St. John, in his epistle, wrote purposefully against them, and bids us beware of them*.

They

* Adversus illos qui dicunt Christum putative apparuisse. l. iii. c. xviii.

They still subsisted in the latter end of the fourth century ; for Aurelius Prudentius, in his poem which he calls *Apotheosis*, consisting of different pieces against different sorts of heretics, has one intitled, “ Against the phantomists, who deny Christ to have had a real human body*.”

Those very early fathers, Irenæus and Justin Martyr, although free from any thing bordering on such extravagancies, did nevertheless contribute to bring into Christianity the Platonic doctrine of a *second God*, which they had learnt before their conversion to faith ; as might be shewn by numerous instances from their writings. And Clemens Alexandrinus,

The Manicheans held this doctrine of Christ being man in appearance only, which they drew from the same source of a false philosophy. St. Austin, speaking of his own sentiments concerning Christ, whilst he was connected with this sect, says, “ I was afraid of believing him (Christ) born of the flesh, lest I should be forced to believe him defiled by the flesh. Metuebam credere in carne natum, ne credere cogerer ex carne inquinatum.—*Confessionum*, l. v. c. 10.

* Adversus phantasmaticos qui Christum negant verum hominis corpus habuisse.—*Prudentii op.* p. 202.

and

and Origen, as they were the most learned of all the Fathers, still more adulterated the simplicity of the gospel, by this and other mixtures of gentile philosophy*.

All this while the true doctrine concerning the One God, the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, was preserved pure and uncorrupted amongst the Jewish Christians. But their country and nation being laid waste and destroyed, first by Vespasian and Titus, and still more by the deplorable calamities their unbelieving brethren brought upon themselves under Adrian; and being now poor and forlorn, and making no pretensions to human learning, they were despised by the rich, and learned gen-

Le Clerc, in his article of Eusebius, (*Bibliothèque universelle, tom. x.*) has collected several testimonies of the high veneration of these ancient fathers, and others after them, for Plato, and the satisfaction they expressed in the agreement of his philosophy with that of Christ, especially on the subject of the *Logos*, in the beginning of St. John's gospel, which they will have to have been the same with this philosopher's doctrine abovementioned. Whether there was such an agreement betwixt the doctrine of Christ and philosophy of Plato, in this and other respects, may well be doubted.

tile Christians, and grew soon to be quite neglected by them.

I do not mean those Jewish Christians, who have been called *Ebionites*, and who held our Saviour Christ to have been only the son of Joseph and Mary: of whom, however, Justin Martyr* speaks most candidly, notwithstanding this manifest error of theirs.

But I speak of those *Nazarene* Christians, who believed our Lord to have been born of the Virgin Mary by the miraculous power of the Holy Ghost, who spoke of God and of Christ in the plain language of the holy scriptures, and kept close to what they found therein revealed, without as-

* “ Altho’ I shall not prove Christ to be God, otherwise than by proving that this is the Christ, and that it was foretold he should be so. Yet will it be just, that thou shouldst believe me deceived in that one point, and yet not deny that this is the Christ, *though he seem to be a man born of men*, and said to be chosen to be the Christ. For there are some friends of mine amongst us [Christians] who profess him to be the Christ, but affirm him to be a man born of men: with whom, however, I do not agree, nor will any so speak who are of the same opinion with me.”—*Justin Martyr, dial. cum Tryph.*

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fecting any philosophic novelties, or being wise above what is there written.

When Mosheim says, vol. i. p. 118. that, although the Nazarenes and Ebionites are generally placed among the sects of the apostolic age, they really belong to the second century, which was their earliest appearance as a sect ; he speaks what was the truth, though wrongly understood by him. For, indeed, *the whole Christian church in the apostolic age, made up of Jews and Gentiles, was entirely Nazarene or Unitarian*; and the Jewish believers, though retaining some of their Jewish rites, as they did not impose them on others, gave no offence, nor caused any separation or division. The gentile Christians were the first separatists or sectaries.

An anonymous writer * against Artemon, about the year 200, bears these Jewish Christians this testimony, tho' he would invalidate it by the contrary on his own side, viz. that they appealed to their ancestors, and to the very apostles themselves, as holding and teaching the same doctrine concerning Christ which they did ; and

* Eusebius, hist. eccles. l. v. c. ult.

that the truth of the gospel, as they held it, was preserved to the time of Victor Bishop of Rome.

These churches of Jewish believers subsisted till the fifth century, but then sunk away, and we hear no more of them. Our countrymen, *Wall*, and *Lardner*, and many learned foreigners, have lamented this coolness of the Gentile Christians towards the Jewish believers, and their aversion to all communion and correspondence with them, which St. Paul laboured to have kept up, and had much at heart. *Rom. xi. 17—24.* It might have been a means of keeping the Gentile church steady in the worship of the one true God, by the *one Mediator, the man Christ Jesus*, *1 Tim. ii. 5.* and have preserved it from other grievous errors, which have so much defaced and nearly paganized the religion of Christ. But—there was to be *a falling away from the faith*, *1 Tim. iv. 1.* and God thought not fit to interpose, but to leave men to themselves.

But another, and a principal source of the corruption of the true Christian doctrine and worship; the parent of the worst of errors, and which also, in the proportion
it

it prevails, will perpetuate them for ever ; the cause of all the animosities, miseries, and bloodshed, that have so often, and so long disgraced the Christian name :—This is none other than that monster ;

Monstrum, horrendum, informe, gens, cui lumen ademptum—

human authority in the church of Christ ; when man or men, single or combined, with or without the permission of the civil magistrate, have set themselves up for lords over the faith and consciences of others, and dictated and prescribed to them, under various pains and discouragements, what they were to believe, or profess to believe, concerning the revealed word and will of God ; and the way in which they were to worship him. The apostles of our Lord assumed no such powers over the minds of men. They did not require obedience to any doctrine of *their own*, but only to what they themselves were taught by Christ and the Holy Spirit.

But their followers could not refrain from so unseemly an ambition, even whilst they were suffering under the cross, and the civil power every where turned against them.

For, towards the close of the second century, Victor, bishop of Rome, excommunicated all the churches of Asia for differing with him about keeping the time of Easter : and he shewed the like imperious behaviour in excommunicating Theodotus, a Jewish Christian, for not coming up to his own opinion concerning Christ, which was that afterwards called *Arian*, and happened then and there chiefly to prevail. A very different temper of mind this from what Justin Martyr shewed, (as cited above,) towards a dissenting brother, but a few years before.

But when the emperors had embraced Christianity, and great worldly privileges and emoluments became annexed to the fashionable religious opinions, the intolerance of Christians towards one another for every little difference would have seemed ridiculous, if it had not been attended with serious consequences to the unhappy dissenters. For a long period, ecclesiastical history is intirely taken up with accounts of the bishops that bore the rule, travelling about to sit in councils, and decide upon opinions which had better have been left unde-

undecided, and would sooner have died away ; and to excommunicate and depose such as differed in opinion from them, from whom they differed as much themselves, and over whom they had no power but what the civil magistrate gave them, who had no right to give them any, or to molest their opponents so long as they demeaned themselves peaceably ; and which power might, with equal justice, have been turned against those who thought themselves most orthodox, and actually was so in the change of times, as the reigning emperor happened to be *Arian* or *Homousian* *

Lord *Bacon* somewhere says ; “ *such as hold pressure of conscience, are guided therein by some private interest of their own.*” This is universally true of all oppressors of the consciences of others, in all ages and countries. The prince’s religion will every where be best † ; and *that*, heresy, and

* Eusebius, eccles. hist. lib. v. c. 28.

† Mr. Hume has furnished us with a very singular instance of the exertion and influence of imperial authority in matters of religion, from our own history.

and to be condemned, which opposes his edicts. The sanguinary laws of the Christian
tian

1571. “ In the former parliament the Puritans had introduced seven bills for a further reformation in religion, but they had not been able to prevail in any one of them. This house of commons had sat a very few days, when Stricland, a member, revived one of the bills, that for the amendment of the liturgy.—Religion was a point of which Elizabeth was, if possible, still more jealous than of matters of state. She pretended, that in quality of supreme head or governor of the church, she was fully empowered, by her prerogative alone, to decide all questions which might arise with regard to doctrine, discipline, or worship ; and she never would allow her parliaments so much as to take these matters into consideration.—The queen was so highly offended with Stricland’s presumption, in moving the bill for reformation of the liturgy, that she sent for him to the council, and prohibited him thenceforth to appear in the house of commons. That act of power was too violent even for this submissive parliament. Carleton complained that the liberties of the house were violated.—Yelverton enforced the principles of liberty with still greater boldness.—The treasurer warned the house to be cautious in their proceedings ; neither to venture further than their assured warrant might extend, nor hazard their good opinion with her majesty in any doubtful cause. The member,

ber,

tian emperors of the East and West, from Constantine *inclusive*, against those who differed

ber, he said, whom they required, 'was not detained on account of any liberty of speech, but for the exhibiting a bill in the house against the prerogative of the queen; a temerity, which was not to be tolerated. Cleeve, another member, remarked, that the sovereign's prerogative is not so much as disputable: he added, *that in questions of divinity, every man was, for his instruction, to repair to his ordinary; and he seems to insinuate that the bishops themselves, for their instruction, must repair to the Queen.*

“ The Speaker moved, that the house should make a stay of all further proceedings: a motion which was immediately complied with. The Queen, finding that the experiment which she had made was likely to excite a great commotion, saved her honour by the silence of the house; and that the question might no more be resumed, she sent next day her permission to Stricland to give his attendance in parliament.—Notwithstanding this rebuke from the throne, the zeal of the commons still engaged them to continue the discussion of those other bills which regarded religion, but they were interrupted by a still more arbitrary proceeding of the Queen, in which the Lords condescended to be her instrument. That house sent a message to the commons, desiring that a committee might attend them. Some members were accordingly appointed for that

ferred in religious opinion from the sect which the amperor favoured, are shocking to humanity, and would affect us more, were not a violent dislike and prejudice

purpose; and the upper house informed them, that the Queen's Majesty being informed of the articles of reformation which they had canvassed, approved of them, intended to publish them, and *to make the bishops execute them by virtue of her regal authority, as supreme head of the church of England*; but that she would not permit them to be treated of in parliament."—*History of England*, 8vo. vol. v. p. 180—184.

The times are happily changed since Elizabeth's days. The commons house of parliament, on Feb. 6, 1772, without apprehension of controul from our gracious sovereign, debated till near the hour of midnight, upon the petition of the clergy, &c. for the removal of subscription to the xxxix articles; and one may surely aver, that another such day's debate must have carried the cause for the petitioners, with all reasonable men.

And soon after in that year, and also in the present 1773, the same honourable house, after a serious and solemn argument, voted almost unanimously for relieving dissenting ministers and schoolmasters from the same burden of subscription; not without the solemn vote, and noble concurrence each time of many of the *Temporal Peers* of great name in the upper house.

grown

grown familiar to us from such bad precedents, against all those *who dare to declare their dissent from a great and splendid public establishment of religion*,—What miseries, or else what sad havock of conscience and integrity, must that one edict of the emperors Arcadius and Honorius have caused in the year 395? It runs thus. “Those persons are comprized under the name of *heretics*, and ought to suffer according to the laws made against them, who shall be discovered to deviate a hair’s breadth from the judgment and track of the catholic religion*,” that is, *the emperor’s religion*, or, as we speak, *the religion of the state*.

I shall make no apology for the following quotation from Dr. Lardner’s remarks on the council of Nice.

“The introducing force and authority in matters of a speculative nature is subversive of true religion and virtue. For what avail human decisions, if they are not satisfying? If you can bring reason and scripture for any doctrine, men will assent. But

* Sir Isaac Newton’s observations upon the Apocalypse of St. John, p. 300.

to say that the bishops of such a council have so declared and determined, is not convincing. Therefore it ought not to be expected, that men should confess and act, as if they were convinced. If you make use of any methods, beside those of rational arguments, to induce men to profess and act as you desire, you do what lies in your power to make them lye and prevaricate. So did this council of Nice.

“ This way of acting may be supposed to have been the chief cause of the ruin of the Christian interest in the East. This, and the like determinations of speculative doctrines, and the violent methods by which they were enforced, may be reckoned to have paved the way for Mahometanism, more than any thing else. By these means ignorance, and hypocrisy, and tedious rituals, came to take place of honesty, true piety, and undissembled spiritual and reasonable worship and devotion.

“ In about three hundred years after the ascension of Jesus, without the aids of secular power or church authority, the Christian religion spread over a large part of Asia, Europe, and Africa. And at the accession

cession of Constantine, and convening the council of Nice, it was almost every where throughout those countries in a flourishing condition. In the space of another three hundred years, or a little more, the purity of the Christian religion was greatly corrupted in a large part of that extent, its glory debased, and its light almost extinguished. What can be this so much owing to, as the determinations and transactions of the council of Nice, and the measures then set on foot, and followed in succeeding times * ?”

* Lardner's Credibility, part ii. vol. viii. p. 22—24.

CHAP.

CHAPTER V.

UNION IN GOD'S TRUE WORSHIP, HOW TO BE ATTAINED.

SYNODS and councils have in different ages been assembled to promote this union; creeds and confessions of faith have been drawn up and imposed, and forms of worship prescribed and enforced by awful authority; but the desired end hath not yet been attained. In the last century, Mr. Dury, a very pious good man, embarked with the most disinterested views, in a design to unite all protestants together in one common confession of faith, and with indefatigable labour travelled over Christendom for near thirty years, to accomplish his benevolent design.

His plan was, to lay down certain fundamental points, and to engage the whole community of protestants in all countries to accede to them, and thus to form a band of amity amongst them. In the letters that passed * between him, Mr. Mede, and Mr. Hartlib, may be seen how little likelihood there was of an union in this

* Mede's works, p. 868, &c.

way. They could not agree upon, or settle what points were fundamental. No church would renounce its peculiarities and infallibility. Indeed such a method was never likely to succeed. What is fundamental doctrine to one man, or to a number of men, and such as they cannot give up, may not be so to others, and yet all be equally sincere and upright before God, and the true disciples of Christ*.

That is a fine declaration of Calvin's, if he had but kept to it †. “ Since the mind

* It was upon this principle of not laying down fundamental doctrines for others, that the excellent Grotius withstood the cries of heresy and Socinianism raised against him from all quarters, and refused to the last to disfigure his noble work of the *Truth of the Christian religion* with making mention of the *Trinity* in it. Not that he would be understood by such an omission to condemn that doctrine, much less those who held it; but he persisted in maintaining, that it was sufficient to convince men of the divine authority of the scriptures, and leave them to themselves to find out the peculiar doctrines therein revealed.—“ Omnes ad sacras literas ducendi sunt, ut inde talia hauriant, quæ, nisi Deo semet patefaciente, cognosci nequeunt.”—*Grotii epist.* p. 493, 761.

† “ Cum in Dei majestate consideranda mens humana per se omnino cœcutiat—si juxta captus sui

mind of man is totally blind of itself when it contemplates the divine Majesty, I trust I shall have the approbation of all good men; if I seek God no where but in his word, think nothing of him but according to his word, nor speak of him but by his word." If this sober reserve and reverence for the word of God be necessary in the private confession of a man's faith, such as Calvin was then making, much more ought it to be observed in the solemn public worship of Almighty God. Nothing of private opinion or fancy should be there admitted, nor any phrases or modes of address used, which have not the express warrant of holy scripture*.

“ *We*

tenuitatem Deum imaginari conetur: istud bonorum omnium pace ac venia facturos confidimus, si Deum nusquam quæramus nisi in ejus verbo, nihil de ipso cogitemus nisi cum ejus verbo, de ipso nihil loquamur nisi per ejus verbum.”—*Calvini epistol.* p. 643.

* “ He [the ever memorable J. Hales] exceedingly detested the tyranny of the church of Rome; more for their imposing uncharitably up on the consciences of other men, than for the errors in their own opinions: and he would often say, he would renounce the religion of the church of England tomorrow, if it obliged him to believe that any other Christian should be damned; and, that nobody would
conclude

*“ We ought to use no other prayers than those which are contained in the holy scripture, (say those ancient Christians, the Vaudois, in their confession of faith, presented to Francis I. 1541.) or such other as are conformable to them for substance *.”*

conclude another damned, that did not wish him so. —He thought that pride and passion, more than conscience, were the causes of all separation from each other's communion; and he frequently said, that *that only kept the world from agreeing upon such a liturgy, as might bring them into one communion; all doctrinal points, upon which men differed in their opinions, being to have no place in any liturgy.*” —Lord Clarendon's history of his own life, p. 54.

* There is such an admirable simplicity and conformity to scripture, running through the whole of the *confession of faith*, from whence the above extract is made, that I doubt not but I shall do a thing acceptable to many of my readers in producing it. I shall therefore transcribe it in the Appendix. We should have been now much farther advanced in Christian knowledge and the pure worship of God, if our articles, and confessions of faith, and liturgies, had been framed after so chaste a model, when we separated from the *mother of idolatries*, the church of Rome. But school-learning, attachment to what had been established, and a slavish copying after a spurious antiquity, misled us then, and continue to mislead us.

A standing apostolic rule concerning prayer.

Archbishop Tillotson, speaking of the gross idolatry of the Virgin Mary, our Lord's mother, among the *papists*, remarks ; " That the greater part of *their* religion, both public and private, is made up of that which was no part at all of the religion of the apostles and primitive Christians ; nay, which plainly contradicts it : for *that* expressly teaches us, that there is but *One object of our prayers*, and *one Mediator by whom* we are to make our addresses to God." " There is one God ; and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus," says St. Paul, 1 Tim. ii. 5. when he gives a standing rule concerning prayer in the Christian church *."

Now this, which this good man, and most instructive preacher rightly and wisely asserts to be a *standing apostolic rule concerning prayer*, from one single text, has been at large evinced to be such, in the foregoing papers, by a long deduction from the holy scriptures ; and it has also been corroborated and confirmed by the

* Tillotson's sermons, vol. x. p. 144.

concurring testimony and confession of the best antiquity harmonizing in this one point, however at variance in others, *that prayer is to be offered to God the Father alone.* It cannot but be, therefore, of the most serious concernment to all, in these enlightened times, not to go contrary themselves, or to influence others in going contrary to so plain a prescribed rule of worship, in which the honour of God is immediately concerned. And is it not inverting the very rule laid down here by the Holy Spirit, to address prayer to *the man Christ Jesus, the Mediator*, as the apostle speaks, and not to the *One God* himself? If then, happily, every thing in our liturgy that is not agreeable to this standing apostolic rule, and the general prescription of God's word, be changed or removed, all Christian people of whatever denomination, ancient or modern, Arians, Athanasians, Socinians, Lutherans, Calvinists, Churchmen, may agree and join together in the worship used by the apostles of Christ and primitive Christians.

Other agreement than this in public worship can never be attained, nor ought

ever to be proposed. For, where men are allowed to read the scriptures, and think for themselves, difference in opinion will be unavoidable, even on points the most important; because whatever is matter of conscience to any one is of the highest importance to him. But *a form of express scriptural worship* must be satisfactory to all, and such in which they can cordially unite. “ Good men, says an excellent person, differing in *their own* expressions, yet agree in *scripture* forms of words, acknowledging the meaning of the Holy Ghost in them is true; and they endeavour to understand and find it out as well as they can; therefore they should continue friends; and think they agree, rather than think they do not agree; because they do agree in what is God’s, and infallible; though they differ in what is their own, and fallible: and upon this consideration forbear one another; and not impose their own, either sense or phrase *.”

But this *charity*, 1 Cor. xiii. this perfect state of Christianity, seems to be still

* Dr. Whichcote’s letter to Dr. Tuckney, p. 11. 12.

afar off, although we * are, I trust, approximating towards it. Some late publications, and a declared indisposition to reformation, especially in the *great object of worship*, forbid to entertain any present hope of much success. In the mean time, however, truth and right things

* I would hope the first words of the following paragraph, written fifteen years since, are too strongly put; for the rest, it is serious and important. “ I do not see any signs in this age, to denote it to be an age of reformation, nor do I think it is the will of God it should; because I rather think I see some manifest proofs to the contrary: the time, however, will come, when, as St. Paul expresseth it, 1 Cor. xi. 3. all men shall know that *the head of every man is Christ; and as the head of the woman is the man, so the head of Christ is God.* The ample illustration of which great truth may possibly be reserved for that glorious day, when *the fullness of the gentiles being come*, the messiahship of Jesus will be more evidently displayed—the *Unity of the Godhead* be established; and the great stumbling-block of offence to the conversion of the Jews being removed, then *shall all Israel be saved*, Rom. xi. 25, 26. But, in the mean time, *there must needs be heresies amongst us*, says the same apostle, *that they which are approved may be made manifest:—Vindication of the histories of the Old and New Testament, by Bishop Clayton,* p. 34, 35.

should be proposed to the public, however unlikely to succeed at present; and often proposed, that men may not lose sight of them. And Providence will raise up instruments to forward its own designs, when the time comes.

It remains to be enquired what remedy there may be for those who cannot, with a safe conscience, continue to officiate, or constantly join in the present forms of our liturgy; who may be afraid of incurring his displeasure, who hath said, *Exod. xx. 3.* "Thou shalt have no other Gods before *me*;" and of contravening our Saviour Christ's express command, so often, but not too often repeated by us, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and *him* only shalt thou serve." *Matth. iv. 10.*

Dr. *Samuel Clarke's* superior genius and learning were the least of his excellencies. His unassuming modesty and humility, his piety, integrity, ardent love of truth, and zeal for God and his true worship in the world, still more distinguished him from ordinary men. It appears from his conversation with Mr. *Emlyn*, to whom he

opened himself without reserve, that the great object of his life, studies, and endeavours, was to procure the removal of the *declarations* and *subscriptions* required in our church to its articles and liturgy, and the *reformation* of the *liturgy* itself; and that, if he had been raised to the see of Canterbury, which, to the everlasting honour of the princes of the last reign, was destined* by them for this *Unitarian Divine*, he would then, indeed, have exerted all his interest and great abilities, to make our church the *most pure*, as it has been long the most respectable of all the reformed churches.

It was a noble attempt that he made, related by Mr. Whiston, to change the doxologies that were used in the singing of psalms in his church at St. James's, which, not being prescribed by the rubric, he might think himself at liberty to alter. But through the zeal of Robinson, the then bishop of London, it proved abortive.

The alteration attempted to be introduced was this :

* Emlyn, vol. ii. p. 492, 493, 494.

To God, through Christ, his Son,
Our Lord, all glory be.

instead of

To Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
Immortal glory be.

But as the venerable apostolic old man, who has preserved this account, remarks—
“ The bishop, in the way of *modern authority*, was quite too hard for *Dr. Clarke* in the way of *primitive Christianity* *.”

Dr. Clarke's heart was entirely set on bringing about some reformation in this capital point of divine worship ; and if his valuable life had been prolonged, in whatever situation he had continued, he would have used his best efforts for it ; and if no success had attended them, I am inclined to believe, from what *Mr. Emlyn* lets fall of the uneasy state of his mind, and from his manifest disapprobation † of all religious worship

* Historical memoirs of the life of *Dr. S. Clarke*, ed. 3. p. 76.— *Mr. Whiston* was above fourscore years old, when he published this last edition.

† This is strongly marked in his amendments of the liturgy of our church, cited below ; in which he blots out every passage, without exception, in which Christ is considered as an object of worship, or prayer offered to him.

not

not immediately addressed to God, the Father, that he would have given up his preferment, and retired.

But what he might not perhaps have been able after all to effect himself, he was labouring at his leisure hours to make more easy for those that came after him.

“ He once shewed me (saith Mr. Emelyn) that he had been making *some emendations* in his common-prayer book. And the very last time I think I ever saw him, the *March* before he died, in some of our last discourse at parting, he asked me, if he had shewn me what he had been doing in his common-prayer book. I said, I had just seen it once. He said, it should not be lost *.”

This his last labour, as it should seem, and monument of his zeal for the honour of God, and purity of his worship, has been presented by his son to the British Musæum, where, it is to be hoped, it will not be deposited in vain.

The

* Emelyn, vol. ii. p. 494.

The author of the *Confessional*, (edition 3. p. 426, note), has given the first information to the public concerning this manuscript, and at the same time produced from it a valuable attestation of Dr. Clarke

Dr. Clarke's
amendments
of the litur-
gy recom-
mended.

The amendments of the liturgy, proposed by Dr. Clarke, chiefly relate to the right direction of prayer and thanksgiving to its only object, the one living and true God, as taught by our Lord Jesus Christ; not but that he has made some very considerable improvements in other respects, as he passed along. It was no small satisfaction, in the perusal of them, to find that those parts of our public service, which had long seemed to me to countenance an unscriptural, and therefore unlawful, forbidden worship, i. e. the offering up of prayer to any but the one true God, the Father; were *all of them* either cancelled or altered by this eminent person. I should have held it fitting and needful for my own justification, to have given some account of those passages in the liturgy on the article of divine worship, which I had scruples in reading, or in joining in the constant use of them: but I reckon it a fortunate circumstance, that I to the design of his own admirable work, which will long remain a classic of the first account in our church, 'till it be superseded and set aside by that full scriptural reformation in doctrine and worship, which it aims to promote.

am able to say, they were also, in a greater or lesser degree, the objections of Dr. Clarke.

A list of exceptionable parts of the liturgy with respect to the object of worship; all of which are either quite struck out, or changed, by Dr. Clarke.

| | |
|--|---|
| Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost: As it was in the begin- ning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. | } struck out, and chang- ed, where- ever it is ordered to be read. |
|--|---|

Te Deum.

| | |
|--|---|
| Thou art the king of glory, O Christ. | } |
|--|---|

| | |
|--|---|
| Thou art the everlasting Son of the Father. | } |
|--|---|

| | |
|---|---|
| When thou tookest upon thee to deliver man, thou didst not abhor the virgin's womb. | } |
|---|---|

| | |
|---|---|
| When thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death, thou didst open the kingdom of heaven to all believers. | } |
|---|---|

| | |
|---|---|
| Thou sittest at the right hand of God in the glory of the Fa- ther. | } |
|---|---|

changed;
and the
whole di-
rected to
God, and
not to *Christ*

Te Deum continued.

We believe that thou shalt
come to be our judge.

We therefore pray thee to help
thy servants, whom thou hast re-
deemed with thy precious blood.

Make them to be numbered
with thy saints in glory everlast-
ing.

Lord have mercy upon us.

Christ have mercy upon us.

Lord have mercy upon us.

changed ;
and the
whole di-
rected to
God, and
not to *Christ*

quite struck
out, here
and every
where.

Prayer of St. Chrysostom.

—when two or three are ga-
thered together in *thy name*—

changed to
thy Son's
name.

The creed of St. Athanasius.

struck out.

Litany.

O God the Son, redeemer of
the world, have mercy upon us,
miserable sinners.

O God the Holy Ghost, pro-
ceeding from the Father and the
Son, have mercy upon us, mi-
serable sinners.

changed ;
and the
whole ad-
dressed to
the one God,
the Father.

O holy, blessed, and glorious
Trinity, three persons and one

God,

Litany continued.

God, have mercy upon us, miserable sinners.

—whom thou hast redeemed with thy most precious blood.

By the mystery of thy holy incarnation, by thy holy nativity and circumcision; by thy baptism, fasting, and temptation;

changed;
and the
whole di-
rected to
God.

By thine agony and bloody sweat; by thy cross and passion; by thy precious death and burial; by thy glorious resurrection and ascension; and by the coming of the Holy Ghost.

Son of God, we beseech thee to hear us.

Son of God, we beseech thee to hear us.

O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world,

Grant us thy peace.

the whole
of this quite
struck out.

O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world,

Have mercy upon us.

O Christ hear us.

O Christ hear us.

Lord have mercy upon us.

Lord

Litany continued.

| | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| <i>Lord have mercy upon us.</i> | } quite struck out. |
| <i>Christ have mercy upon us.</i> | |
| <i>Christ have mercy upon us.</i> | |
| <i>Lord have mercy upon us.</i> | |
| <i>Lord have mercy upon us.</i> | |
| From our enemies defend us, | } |
| O Christ. | |
| O Son of David, have mercy upon us. | } changed, and directed to God. |
| Both now and ever vouchsafe to hear us, O Christ. | |
| Graciously hear us, O Christ, | } struck out. |
| graciously hear us, O Lord Christ. | |

Prayer in time of dearth and famine,

| | |
|---|--|
| —to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost be all honour and glory, now and for ever. | } struck out here, and every where throughout the liturgy. |
| | |

*Collects.**First Sunday in Advent.*

| | |
|---|--|
| — who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, now and ever. | } changed here, and in all other places. |
| | |

Third Sunday in Advent.

| | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| O Lord Jesu Christ, who, at thy first coming, &c. | } changed, and addressed to God. |
| | |

Fourth

Fourth Sunday in Advent.

changed.

Christmas-Day.

—who liveth and reigneth
with thee and the same Spirit,
ever one God, world without
end.

} changed
here, and
every where.

St. Stephen's Day.

—who prayed for his murder-
ers to thee, O blessed Jesus—

} changed,
and direct-
ed to God.

Trinity Sunday.

changed.

Nicene creed.

struck out.

Exhortation to the communion.

—above all ye must give most
humble and hearty thanks to God
the Father, the Son, and the
Holy Ghost, for the redemption
of the world by the death and
passion of our Saviour Christ,
both God and man.—

} changed,
and direct-
ed to God.

To him, therefore, with the
Father, and the Holy Ghost, let
us give continual thanks.

Preface upon the feast of Trinity.

struck out.

Prayer

Prayer after the communion.

—by whom, and with whom
 in the unity of the Holy Ghost,
 all honour and glory be unto
 thee, O Father. } changed.

O Lord, the only begotten
 Son, Jesu Christ, O Lord God,
 Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
 that takest away the sins of the
 world, have mercy upon us.
 Thou that takest away the sins
 of the world, have mercy upon
 us. Thou that takest away the
 sins of the world, receive our
 prayer. Thou that fittest at the
 right hand of God the Father,
 have mercy upon us. } changed in-
 tirely, and
 addressed
 only to God.

For thou only art holy, thou
 only art the Lord, thou only, O
 Christ, with the Holy Ghost,
 art most high in the glory of
 God the Father. }

Public baptism of infants.

—Ye have prayed, that our
 Lord Jesus Christ would vouch-
 safe to received him, to release
 him of his sins, to sanctify him } changed
 here, and
 also in the
 baptism of
 such as are
 of riper
 years.

with

with the Holy Ghost, to give him the kingdom of heaven and everlasting life—Ye have heard also, that our Lord Jesus hath promised in his gospel to grant all these things.

changed here, and also in the baptism of such as are of riper years.

Catechism.

What dost thou chiefly learn in these articles of the belief?

First, I learn to believe in God the Father, who hath made me and all the world.

Secondly, in God the Son, who hath redeemed me and all mankind.

struck out.

Thirdly, in God the Holy Ghost, who sanctifies me, and all the elect people of God.

Matrimony.

God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, bless, preserve, and keep you.

changed.

Visitation of the sick.

Absolution.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath left power to his church to absolve all sinners, who truly re-

quite struck out.

pent and believe in him, of his great mercy forgive thee thine offences; and, by his authority committed to me, I absolve thee from all thy sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

quite struck out.

What may be done by those who cannot conscientiously join in the established worship.

"I may err, and yet be saved. In the dark and intricate walks of controversy, I may make false steps, without being at all the more out of my way to blessedness." Sincerity and integrity are things final in religion; right opinions are of inferior consideration, and instrumental only. Earnestly as it is to be wished for and endeavoured, that our solemn public addresses to almighty God, and worship of him, were framed and conducted in the most perfect manner, suited to the discoveries made of himself and his merciful designs by our Lord Jesus Christ, and so as best to cultivate in us a temper of devoutest reverence, submission, and obedience to him, and of most unbounded love to our fellow-creatures of mankind:

yet

yet as any great degree of perfection is not to be attained in human appointments, or but by slow degrees ; it seems a duty to acquiesce in the public forms of religious worship, though faulty and imperfect, and not to make them a cause of separation from our Christian brethren, where we can innocently comply with them.

About five and twenty years ago, many striking faults and defects in our liturgy and church-establishment, were in the most gentle and inoffensive manner pointed out, and first, privately, and in manuscript, submitted to the consideration of an eminent prelate, said to be Bishop Gibson ; and afterwards, if not with his consent, yet without a prohibition from him, laid before the public, in the treatise called the *Free and Candid Disquisitions*, &c.

The writers of that valuable work do not represent any of those things, of which they sought the redress, as contrary to the word of God, but as unedifying, and hindering its good effect on the minds of his worshippers. And in particular, they appear satisfied with the commonly received doctrine of the Trinity, although they plead for the removal of the *Athanasian*
O creed,

creed, or a liberty at least to drop it, as serving no good end, and some bad ones.

But the matter becomes infinitely more serious and important to the individual, when the worship enjoined in the liturgy is esteemed to be directed to a wrong object, and *sinful*; sinful, I mean, to his apprehension, who is convinced from the sacred scriptures, that God, the Father, is alone the object of religious worship, and that prayer ought not to be addressed to any other being or person whatsoever. To join constantly in forms of devotion, that are directed to one or more other persons, will appear, more or less, an approbation of such worship, and must influence him to wish for some other forms which he can more approve, and in which he may not *worship God amiss*.

Many members of our established church are said to be offended with its *Trinitarian* forms, so as to be kept thereby from the *duty of assembling themselves* Heb. x. 25. *together* for religious worship, to their own moral loss and disadvantage without extraordinary care and holy vigilance; and to the manifest detriment of others, by an open example of irreligion. Many there
are

are also, who are much hurt and dissatisfied with joining in devotions they disapprove; but are unwilling to go over to the churches of our dissenting brethren, on account of their preference of a prescribed form of prayer; and are therefore at a loss where to turn themselves for social worship of the great Creator, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

To such persons as these, something in the way of Dr. Clarke's *reformed liturgy*, holds forth every thing which they seek. By adopting this, they may quiet and satisfy their own minds, in that great point, *the right object of worship*; and may do the most essential service to the church established, by bearing a peaceable, open, and most effectual testimony against her errors; and remain a perpetual standing monument of her departure from the purity of God's worship, until she return to it.

The following passage from *an account of Mr. Firmin's religion*, annexed to his *Life*, falls in so aptly and intirely with my proposal and design, that I may not omit it.

“ He [Mr. Firmin] proposed, besides the continuation* of his former efforts, to hold assemblies for divine worship, distinct from the assemblies of any other denomination of Christians. But he did not intend these assemblies or congregations by way of † schism, or separation from the church; but only as *fraternities* in the church, who would undertake a more especial care of *that article*, for the sake of which it is certain *both the Testaments* were written. The great design and scope of both Testaments, and the

* This refers to a scheme of agreement betwixt the church of England and the Socinians, which Mr. Firmin had caused to be published, in which the Socinians declared, that they could look upon *the church of England to be a Socinian church*, and heartily adjoin themselves to her, if all that was meant by a Trinity of persons, was only *three internal relations of the Deity to itself*; an interpretation which had been publicly espoused by Dr. Wallis and others, in the controversy with Dr. Sherlock, who had gone into the contrary extreme.

† [Schism] Separation from a particular church, on account of God's true worship not being rightly upheld in it, *is no blameable schism. Such schism is often times a duty, and laudable. Such schismatics were we, and the whole body of protestants, when we separated from the idolatrous church of Rome.*

reason

reason that they were given by God, was to regain mankind to the belief and acknowledgment of *but One God*; to destroy polytheism of all sorts. Mr. Firmin intended to recommend it to the Unitarian congregations, as the very reason of their distinct assembling, to be particularly mindful of, and zealous for, the article of the *Unity*; to cause it to be so explained in their assemblies, catechisms, and books, that all men might easily and readily know in what sense the Unity of God is to be believed. He feared that, without such assemblies, the continual use of terms, viz. a *Trinity of Divine persons*, which in their ordinary signification are confessed by all to imply *three Gods*, would paganize in some time the whole Christian church, which is heathen already in the majority of its members by occasion of those terms; and that no sufficient care is taken to interpret them to the people*,"

This plan of Mr. Firmin's did not take effect, probably by his being soon after removed away by death. Nor does it appear to have been put into execution by any of

* An account of Mr. Firmin's religion, p. 50. 51,

his friends. And near fourscore years have lapsed since his time, whilst our church, and its form of worship, remain the same : no alteration made in its unscriptural language on this article ; but all the unlearned, and some of better account, too generally conceiving of *the Trinity of Divine persons*, as of *three equal Gods equally to be worshiped*.

“ Since, then, there is not a plurality of Gods, says our late metropolitan, and yet the Son and Spirit are each of them God, no less than the Father : it plainly follows, that they are in a manner by us inconceivable, so united to him, that *these three are one* ; but still in a manner equally inconceivable, so distinguished from him, that no one is the other*.”

From this description, plain ordinary minds would hardly be able to gather, that there is but *One God*. We should be unavoidably led to conclude that there are three Gods. For the Son and Spirit are declared *each of them to be God no less than the Father*. And though it be in words dis-

* Archbishop Secker's lectures on the church catechism, vol. i. p. 199.

owned, that there is a plurality of Gods, yet in common arithmetic, the Son and Spirit, each of them God no less than the Father, do certainly count *three Gods*.

In the Dean of Gloucester's sermons, very lately published, at page 54, we meet with the following doxology; " To *him* therefore, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, let these miracles of divine mercy be ever ascribed; and *to them* be glory, praise, majesty, and dominion, both now and for evermore."

The personal pronoun, *him*, evidently points to One person, One individual, intelligent agent. So that how it can relate to *three persons*, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and *they* be called *him*, is hard to say, or to reconcile with grammar or notation of numbers: and for the latter clause of ascription of *equal glory to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*, it is assuredly without precedent in the holy scriptures.

Such *fraternities* as those now mentioned, i. e. churches or societies of *Unitarian* Christians, would by degrees contribute to the removal of such unscriptural language and worship as this, by holding forth a better

pattern; and to many other valuable ends of true religion. I have often thought that if the members of Mr. Whiston's *society for promoting primitive Christianity**, such among them as were of the church of England, the late Speaker Mr. Onslow and others, had formed such a fraternity or church as we are here treating of, the influence of such an example might have had great and lasting good effect on their families, their friends, and many others in succession, and we should at this day have perceived and enjoyed many singular advantages to true Christianity resulting from it; instead of which, by continuing in constant communion with the church established, the benefit of their example and testimony is almost intirely lost.

It must, nevertheless, be always confessed and acknowledged, that different persons see the same thing in different lights, and form contrary conclusions from it; and no one ought to condemn another that differeth from him. What has been here offered, is only applicable to those who are persuaded from holy scripture,

* Historical memoirs of the life of Dr. S. Clarke, page 67.

that religious worship is to be paid to God, the Father alone, in the name of Jesus Christ, and who may esteem it unlawful to join constantly in the use of Trinitarian forms of worship, as thinking that by so doing they give their seal of approbation to them; which, surely, to those that are so persuaded, is no indifferent matter.

But, however things may appear to those who occupy the place of hearers, who have no office or authority in the church, and may not suppose themselves to give their assent to any thing they hear, any farther than it is inwardly approved by them; it can hardly be reckoned a matter of indifference to those who lead the devotions of the congregation, and thereby make them much more their own, *to put themselves to the necessity of continual double meaning and collusion, in addressing prayer sometimes to the Son, sometimes to the Spirit, as no less God than the Father, all the while that they are convinced, that there is but one person, the object of prayer, the One God, the Father; to whom alone it is to be addressed.* And this brings the matter home to the particular case and situation of the writer.

CHAPTER VI.

ΤΩΝ ΠΕΡΙ 'ΕΑΥΤΟΥ.

MAY I have leave to say, without blame, that as far as memory goes back, I was impressed from early youth with a love of truth and virtue, a fear of God, and a desire to approve myself to him; which have never left me to this hour, though not always equally governed by them, nor improving so great a favour and blessing from God as I ought to have done.

After the usual time spent at school and in the university, I entered into the ministry of the gospel, out of a free and deliberate choice, with a full persuasion, that it was the best way in which I could serve God, and be useful to man, and with an earnest desire that I might promote these the great ends of it.

Some things in the xxxix. articles of our church I always disapproved. And I remember it struck me at the time, as a strange unnecessary entanglement, to put young men upon declaring and subscribing their approbation of such a large heterogeneous

neous mass of positions and doctrines as are contained in the liturgy, articles, and homilies ; especially, as I had observed, that none but those called Methodists, who were then much spoken of, preached in conformity to them. But I was not under any scruples, or great uneasiness on this account. I had hitherto no doubts ; or rather, I had never much thought of, or examined into *the doctrine of the Trinity* : but supposed all was right there.

Some years after, many doubts concerning that doctrine, which had sprung up in the mind at different times and from various causes, compelled me to a closer study of the scriptures with regard to it ; for the state of suspense I was in was very uneasy to me. The more I searched, the more I saw the little foundation there was for the doctrine commonly received and interwoven with all the public devotions of the church, and could not but be disturbed at a discovery so ill suiting my situation. For in the end I became fully persuaded, to use St. Paul's express words, 1 Corinth. viii. 6. that *there is but one God, the Father*, and *he alone* to be worshiped. This appeared

to be the uniform unvaried language and practice of the Bible throughout. And I found the sentiments and practice of Christians in the first and best ages* corresponding

* Athanasius, and others of the post-Nicene fathers, were much posed how to digest and reconcile to their new doctrine the language that had been used by such apostolic characters that had lived before them, as Dionysius of Alexandria, and Gregory of Neocæsarea, concerning Christ; who hesitated not to call him *a creature, made*, and the like. They were reduced to say, that such expressions were used according to a *certain œconomy*, as they stiled it, but which was a thing intirely of their own imaginations: or, that they were expressions uttered only in the way of dispute, and to carry a point against an adversary, and not the real sentiments of those worthy persons; an imputation of dissingenuity and artifice, which could only belong to those who invented it.

This way of getting over such expressions concerning Christ in the scriptures, and other early writings, which are thought to lower him too much for some men's systems, has now given place to what is called the *two natures* in Christ; a circumstance of which our Saviour Christ himself appears wholly unconscious, and his apostles tells us nothing about it. Irenæus was certainly ignorant of it, where in one place, alluding to Mark xiii. 32. he says, " Since Our Lord himself, the Son of God, owned that the
Fether

in with it. In a course of time afterwards, in the progress and result of this enquiry, my scruples wrought so far as to put me upon actually taking some previous steps, with a design to relieve myself by quitting my preferment in the church. What prevented this resolution from taking place and being completed, I go on to relate.

1. Destined early, and educated for the ministry, and my heart engaged in the service, when the moment of determination came, I felt a reluctance at casting myself out of my profession and way of usefulness, that quite discouraged me. This was probably heightened by my being alone at the time, having no intimate friend to consult or converse with, and my imagination might be shocked by the strangeness and singularity of what I was going to do; for such subjects then, upwards of fifteen years ago,

Father alone knew the day and the hour of judgment, when he said expressly, “ of that day, and that hour, knoweth no one, not the Son, but the Father only :” let us not think much to reserve to God questions that are far more difficult in respect of our capacities. For we are not greater than our master.”

Irenæus, lib. ii. c. 48.

were

were not so much canvassed, or become so familiarized as they have been since. These apprehensions, I am convinced, had great sway at the time, and not any worldly retrospects or motives, by which I was never much influenced. And beside, I had then a prospect of not being left intirely destitute of support, if I had gone out of the church.

But I did not enough reflect, that when unlawful compliances of any sort are required, the first dictates of conscience, which are generally the rightest, are to be attended to, and that the plain road of duty and uprightness, will always be found to lead to the truest good in the end, because it is that which is chalked out by God himself*.

—God

* Says one of the ejected ministers, after the restoration in 1660, *Mr. Oldfield of Carsington, Derbyshire*, in his private MS. soliloquy and deliberation with himself, which fell into *Dr. Calamy's* hands; 'When thou canst no longer continue in thy work, without dishonour to God, discredit to religion, foregoing thy integrity, wounded conscience, spoiling thy peace, and hazarding the loss of thy salvation; in a word, when the conditions upon which thou must continue (if thou wilt continue) in thy employ-

——God doth not need
 Either man's work, or his own gifts, who best
 Bear his mild yolk, they serve him best : his state
 Is kingly. Thousands at his bidding speed
 And post o'er land and ocean without rest ;
They also serve who only stand and wait.

Milton, Sonnet xx.

2. Many worthy persons, and some of
 my own acquaintance, whose opinions
 varied

employments are sinful, and unwarranted by the
 word of God ; thou mayest, yea, thou must be-
 lieve, that God will turn thy very silence, suspen-
 sion, deprivation, and laying aside, to his glory and
 the advancement of the gospel's interest. When
 God will not use thee in one kind, yet he will in
 another. A soul that desires to serve and honour
 him, shall never want opportunity to do it : nor
 must thou so limit the holy One of *Israel*, as to
 think he hath but one way in which he can glorify
 himself by thee. He can do it by thy silence, as
 well as by thy preaching, thy laying aside, as well
 as thy continuance in thy work." And a little af-
 ter, towards the conclusion, "'Tis not pretence of
 doing God the greatest service, or performing the
 weightiest duty, that will excuse the least sin, though
 that sin capacitated or gave us the opportunity for
 the doing that duty. Thou wilt have little thanks,
 O my soul, if when thou art charged with corrupt-
 ing

varied little from mine, could nevertheless satisfy themselves so as to remain in the church and officiate in it. Why then, it often occurred to me, and others did not spare to remonstrate; why must I alone be so singularly nice and scrupulous, as not to comply with what wiser and better men could accommodate themselves to, but disturb others, and distress myself, by enthusiastic fancies, purely my own, bred in gloomy solitude, which by time, and the free communication and unfolding of them to others, might be dispersed and removed, and give way to a more cheerful and enlarged way of thinking? It was

ing God's worship, falsifying thy vows, &c. thou pretendest a necessity for it, in order to a continuance in the ministry, &c."

Calamy's account (vol. ii. p. 175.) of ministers who suffered themselves to be *ejected and silenced*, to the number of *two thousand*, rather than submit to the new impositions, and subscribe and conform to the liturgy and articles, against their consciences: *a long list*, that does honour to human nature; and to our own country in particular, which has hitherto taken the lead in the restoration of God's true religion: for *Wickliff* held up the light to *Luther* that came after him; and may *England* still hold it up to the rest of the nations!

worth

worth the while at least to try such a method, and not rashly to take a step of which I might long repent.

3. It was suggested, that I was not author or contriver of the things imposed and complained of. All I did was ministerial only, in submission to civil authority, which is, within certain limitations, the authority of God; and which had imposed these things only for peace and public good.—That I ought not only to leave my benefice, but to go out of the world, if I expected a perfect state of things, in which there was no flaw or hardship.—That if there was a general tendency in what was established to serve the interests of virtue and true religion, I ought to rest satisfied, and wait for a change in other incidental matters that were grievous to me, but not generally felt by others.—That in the mean time, I had it in my power to forward the desired work, by preparing men's minds for it, whenever there should be a disposition in the state to rectify what was amiss. Therefore, if I could in any way of interpretation, reconcile the prescribed forms with the scripture in my own

mind, and make myself easy, I was not only justified, but to be commended.

These considerations all together were of weight to divert me then from the thought of quitting my station in the church, and brought me in time to remain tolerably quiet and easy in it. Not that I now justify myself therein. Yea, rather I condemn myself. But as I have humble hope of the divine forgiveness, let not men be too rigid in their censures: let those only blame and condemn, who know what it is *to doubt*; to be in perplexity about things of highest importance; to be in fear of causelessly abandoning a station assigned by Providence, and being found idle and unprofitable, when the Great Master came to call for the account of the talent received.

The methods I took to satisfy my own mind were these. My great difficulty was the point of worship. In comparison with this *, subscription to the articles, however momentous

* The petitioning clergy begun, where all true reformation must begin, in seeking the abolition of subscription. For until this foundation be laid *in*

momentous in itself, gave *me then* but little concern. For as the *devotions* of the church are framed in strict agreement with the articles, and correspond with them more especially in what relates to religious worship, I looked upon my continuing to officiate in them as a constant *virtual* repeti-

deeds as well as words, that nothing in the articles or liturgy is to be received and believed, any further than it is agreeable to holy scripture, you are tied down to acknowledge another rule as superior to God's word, and giving law to it, and can make no reformation but in conformity with the articles and liturgy to which you are bound.

However earnestly therefore some of the petitioners might wish for amendments in many things, they did not think it became them to propose any, lest it should be thought arrogating to themselves an authority of deciding for others in matters of faith, and setting up *their* sense of holy scripture to be followed by the nation. But if holy scripture was once clearly and authentically acknowledged as the only rule of faith and doctrine, and no declaration or subscription required to any thing else, but so far as found agreeable with that rule, they knew that Arianism, Socinianism, Calvinism, Pelagianism, all sects and divisions would drop of themselves, and Christians come forth into truth, and perfect liberty and peace.

tion of my subscription ; and therefore I needed not, nor did decline, the *actual* repetition of it, when occasion served : though I was not forward in seeking such occasions.

I brought myself to consider the *Trinitarian* forms in the liturgy, and the *invocations* at the entrance of *the litany*, as a *threefold* representation of the One God, the Father, governing all things by himself, and by his Son, and Spirit ; and as a *threefold* way of addressing him, as Creator and original benevolent cause of all things ; as Redeemer of mankind by his Son, and their Sanctifier by his Holy Spirit.

This was the famous and avowed explication of the Trinity, published by Dr. Wallis, Savilian professor of mathematics in Oxford, which was well received by the University, when Dr. Sherlock's explication, that there were three infinite distinct minds and substances in the Trinity, underwent a public censure.

I shall give it in the Professor's own words, as I find them in a pamphlet intitled, " Considerations on the Explications of the Doctrine of the Trinity," p. 7, 1693.

The

The Unitarians having accused the doctors of the church of maintaining, that there was more than one divine person, or more than one person who is true and most high God, Dr. Wallis replies ;

“ This reasoning is grounded on this silly mistake, that a divine person is as much as to say, a *Divinity*, or a *God* ; when indeed a divine person is only a *mode*, or *respect*, or *relation* of God to his creatures. He beareth to his creatures these three relations, modes, or respects, that he is their Creator, their Redeemer, their Sanctifier : this is what we mean, and all that we mean, when we say God is three persons. He hath those three relations to his creatures, and is thereby no more three Gods, than he was three Gods to the Jews, because he calleth himself the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.”

I took all opportunities, and have done for many years, both in public, and privately, to bear my testimony to this great truth of holy scripture, that *there is but one God, the Father*, with great plain-

ness, and without any reserve. But I purposely refrained from the use of those technical unscriptural names *Trinity*, *Person*, *Substance*, and the like, and every thing that bore the air of controversy, in the pulpit; for I held it an injury to my hearers to waste their hours of public religious improvement in any thing that had not an immediate connection with a virtuous and holy life, to which it was my most earnest desire and constant endeavour to lead them. And I hoped I was laying a good foundation to build on for those that came after me, when the time of a farther reformation should come; and that I might thus innocently continue* in a church where there were many

* “ The illustrious Father Paul, with many other Venetians, about the beginning of the last century, were sadly weary of the corruptions of their worship in the church of Rome, and groaning for a reformation; and F. Paul in particular wished to have left Venice and come over to England; but he was so much esteemed by the senate for his great wisdom, that he was consulted by them as an oracle, and trusted with their most important secrets; so that he saw it was impossible for him to obtain his *congé*, and therefore he made a shift to comply as far as he could with their established way of worship; but he had

many things I disapproved, and wished to have amended, as I knew not where I might be in any degree alike useful.

Thus I went on in the discharge of my duty, till a few years ago, when, from some providential awakenings *, I secretly
but

had in many things particular methods, by which he in a great measure rather *quieted* than satisfied his conscience. In saying of mass, he past over many parts of the canon, and in particular those prayers in which their sacrifice was offered up to the honour of saints. He never prayed to saints, nor joined in those parts of the offices that went against his conscience; and in private confessions and discourses, he took people off from these abuses, and gave them right notions of the purity of the Christian religion; so he hoped he was sowing seeds that might be fruitful in another age: and thus he believed he might live innocent in a church that was defiled. And when one prest him hard in this matter, and objected that he still held communion with an idolatrous church, and gave it credit by adhering outwardly to it, by which means others that depended much on his example would be likewise encouraged to continue in it: all the answer he made to this was, *that God had not given him the spirit of Luther.*"

Burnet's Life of Bishop Bedell, p. 16, 17.

* " Sir Edward Atkins (that upright chief baron of the exchequer *in evil times*) at the Revolution, hav-

but firmly resolved to seek an opportunity to relinquish a situation, that was now become not very supportable to me.

I could not now satisfy myself with Dr. Wallis's and the like softenings and qualifications of the Trinitarian forms in the liturgy. I wondered how I had been able to bring myself to imagine, that I was *worshipping the Father in spirit and in truth*, John iv. 23, 24. whilst I was addressing two other persons, *God the Son*, and *God the Holy Ghost*, and imploring favours severally of *them* in terms that implied their personality and distinct agency, and deity, as much as that of the Father.

If invocations so particular, language so express and personal, might be sifted and examining some scruple in taking the new oaths himself, though he condemned not those that did take them, resigned his great post out of a principle of conscience, and retired into the country. His usual saying was, when he was discoursed with about this matter, that the devil (the evil conscience within) was busy with men on their death-beds; and therefore *he would keep his mind free, that when he should come to die, he might have no doubts and fears on that account to disturb his conscience.*"

Life of Dean Prideaux, p. 76.

plained

plained away into prayer to one God only; I might by the like supposals and interpretation bring myself to deify and pray to the Virgin Mary, taking her, as the Papists do, to be now alive and beatified in heaven; and maintain that I was still only praying to the one God, who was thus invoked in his creature that was so nearly united to him.

It appeared to me a blameable duplicity, that whilst I was praying to the one God the Father, the people that heard me, were led by the language I used, to address themselves to two other persons, or distinct intelligent agents; for they would never subtilize so far, as to fancy the Son and Holy Spirit to be merely two modes, or respects, or relations of God to them.

As one great design of Our Saviour's mission was to promote the knowledge and worship of the Father, *the only true God*, as he himself tells us, John xvii. 3. I could not think it allowable or lawful for me, on any imagined prospect of doing good, to be instrumental in carrying on a worship, which I believed directly contrary to the mind of Christ, and condemned by him.

If

If it be a rule in morals, *quod dubitas, ne feceris*; it is still more evident, that we are not to do any thing that *we know to be evil*, no, not to procure the *greatest good*, Rom. iii. 8. For God does not want my sinful act. It would be impious to suppose, that he cannot carry on his government, and promote the felicity of his creatures, without it. And although in his providence he may bring good out of my evil, he will not let the doer of it go unpunished. And if any thing be evil and odious in his sight, prevarication and falshood is such; and most of all an habitual course thereof in the most solemn act a creature can be engaged in, the worship of him, the holy, all-seeing God.

It is related in the life of archbishop Tillotson, that his friend Mr. Nelson having consulted him by letter from the Hague, in the year 1691, with regard to the practice of those nonjurors, who frequented the churches, and yet professed that they did not join in the prayers for their majesties *; “ As to the case you

* Birch’s Life of Archbishop Tillotson, p. 259.

put, replied his Grace, I wonder men should be divided in opinion about it. I think it is plain, that no man can join in prayers, in which there is any petition, which he is verily persuaded is sinful. *I cannot endure a trick any where, much less in religion."*

The archbishop may be held by some to be too severe a casuist. But if it was his opinion, that a man who, after the Revolution continued attached to the late king James, could not consistently or honestly frequent a communion of Christians where their majesties king William and queen Mary were prayed for; what would he have replied, thought I often with myself, in the case of one who was not barely present, but was the mouth of the congregation in offering up prayers to God, which were believed to be derogatory and injurious to his peerless majesty and incommunicable perfections, and, in the mind of the offerer, a false and unworthy representation of him to others? This seemed *a trick in religion*, which the honest mind of that prelate would have still *less endured*.

From

From the first that I engaged with the associated clergy for procuring the removal of subscription to formularies of faith and doctrine drawn up by fallible men, I foresaw, that if no relief was obtained, nor any prospect opened of a reformation of the liturgy with regard to the great object of worship, or of a disposition to indulge a latitude to private persons to make discretionary alterations in it for themselves, by the *express* rule of holy scripture ; it would certainly terminate as to myself in a resignation of my office in the church ; and I thought this would be a fitting season for it.

The service done to Christ's true religion by the clergy association and petition to parliament, has been great and wide spread, notwithstanding it failed of immediate success in its primary object. A spirit of ingenuous enquiry has been stirred up by it in the minds of many. The holy scriptures have been seen and acknowledged to be the only rule of faith and conscience to Christian men ; and there is also, in consequence of this, a very general acknowledgment among all ranks, that there are some things extremely wrong in our establishment,

blishment, particularly as it respects the yolk of subscription, and the restraint the clergy are laid under in their ministrations, and in declaring the mind and will of God to the people.

But nothing, it must be owned, has hitherto turned out favourable from it, with regard to the *great object of worship*, and a scriptural reform of the liturgy with regard to it. Many persons in our church, known to be ill at ease on this point, but unconnected with the petitioners, flattered themselves, that the nation's eyes were opening, that we were coming to a better temper, and that things were working towards a happy change in this important article. Most true it is indeed, and I have found it by large experience, that the gospel light of the knowledge of the one true God, and the worship to be paid to him only, as taught by Jesus Christ, has long been spreading *its beautiful ray* through the British nations, so that many of all ranks begin to see with concern the striking opposition betwixt our public forms of worship and those laid down in the word of

God;

God ; and a reformed liturgy in this respect, whose conformity to holy scripture could not but instantly approve itself to them, would be gladly received and admitted, with a very general consent. But the fault lies not here. It has appeared in the opposition made to the petitioning clergy from the press, that not only those from whom it might be expected, but some that were before esteemed of a more liberal cast, have shewn a disposition very contrary to the making or admitting of any reformation in our unscriptural forms of worship. And declarations of the like import are said to have fallen from their superiors in still higher place.

In this state of things, therefore, I had no choice left, but either to change the public service of the church, and make it such as I could conscientiously officiate in ; or quietly to retire.

I could not reconcile myself to the former, because I looked upon the declaration of conformity and subscription at institution to be such solemn ties, that I could not be easy under so great a violation of
 them

them *. For I must have adopted all those above-mentioned, as Dr. Clarke's amendments, or even more; which would have been making almost a new service of it.

But could I have brought my own mind to it, there were some things in my situation, in so large a parish, with three chapels in it, which would have made such a change impracticable. Not to mention also, that when incapacitated by sickness, or removed by death, the people in all probability must have returned back to their old forms again. In short, such an attempt would have been likely, in my place, to have produced much confusion and perplexity, to say the least: and I could not see any adequate religious improvement or edification among my people, likely to arise from it; the only

* The following is the form of the engagement to conformity at institution to a living before the bishop.

" I do declare that I will conform to the liturgy

" of the church of England, as it is now by

" law established. A. B.

" This declaration was made and subscribed before me, by the said A. B. to be admitted and instituted into the rectory or vicarage of — in the county of — in the year of Our Lord —, and in the — year of our consecration."

justifiable end of making such a change, and staying with them.

Upon the most calm and serious deliberation, therefore, and weighing of every circumstance, I am obliged to give up my benefice, whatever I suffer by it, unless I would lose all inward peace and hope of God's favour and acceptance in the end. Somewhat of a tendency to an issue of this sort, my friends may have occasionally observed, or recollected to have been dropt in conversation, or by letter : but I refrained from naming it directly, and thought it became me to be silent till the time approached, as my reasons were not another's ; nor my conduct a rule for their's ; nor did I know, or believe, that any one had such cogent motives to leave his station and ministrations in the church as I had.

The example of an excellent person, now living at Wolverhampton, *Dr. Robertson*, has been a secret reproach to me ever since I heard of it. For I thought, and perhaps justly, that he might not have all those reasons of dislike to our established forms of worship that I had ; and, though myself not without unknown straits and difficulties

culties to struggle with, and *not alone* involved in them, yet have I not *all* those dissuaves and discouragements that he paints forth in his affecting letter to the bishop of Ferns, subjoined to his instructive and learned work, and which I shall take leave to insert as an ornament and suitable conclusion of my subject and book.

——“ In debating this matter with myself (says that worthy man) besides the arguments directly to the purpose, several strong collateral considerations came in upon the positive side of the question: The straightness of my circumstances pressed me close: a numerous family, quite unprovided for, pleaded with the most pathetic and moving eloquence. And the infirmities and wants of age, now coming fast upon me, were urged feelingly. But one single consideration prevailed over all these.—*That the Creator and Governor of the universe, whom it is my first duty to worship and adore, being the God of truth, it must be disagreeable to him to profess, subscribe, or declare, in any matter relating to his worship and service, what is not believed strictly and simply to be true* *.”

* Attempt to explain the words *reason, substance, &c.* p. 241. London, 1768.

A P P E N D I X.

N U M B E R I*.

JOHN FOX'S LETTER TO QUEEN ELIZABETH, TO
DISSUADE HER FROM BURNING TWO DUTCH A-
NABAPTISTS FOR HERESY IN SMITHFIELD. 1575.

SERENISSIMA beatissima princeps,
S regina illustrissima, patriæ decus, sæ-
culi ornamentum ! Ut nihil ab animo meo
omnique expectatione abfuit longius quam
ut majestatis tuæ amplissimam excellentiam
molesta unquam interpellatione obturba-
rem ; ita vehementer dolet silentium hoc,
quo hætenus constanter sum usus, non ea-
dem constantia perpetuo tueri ita ut vole-
bam licuisse. Ita nunc præter spem ac opi-
nionem meam nescio qua infelicitate evenit,
ut quod omnium volebam minime, id con-
tra me maxime faciat hoc tempore. Qui
cum ita vixerim hucusque, ut molestus fue-
rim nemini, invitus nunc cogor contra na-
turam principi etiam ipsi esse importunus,
non re ulla aut causa mea, sed aliena in-
ductus calamitate. Quæ quo acerbior sit et
luctuosior, hoc acriores mihi addit ad de-

* See page 47.

precandum stimulos. Nonnullos intelligo in Anglia hic esse non Anglos, sed adventitios, Belgas quidem opinor, partim viros, partim feminas, nuper ob improbata dogmata in iudicium advocatos. Quorum aliquot feliciter reducti publica luerunt pœnitentia; complures in exilium sunt condemnati, idque rectissime meo iudicio factum esse arbitror. Jam ex hoc numero unum esse aut alterum audio, de quibus ultimum exustionis supplicium (nisi succurrat tua pietas) brevi est statuendum. Qua una in re duo contineri perspicio, quorum alterum ad errorum pravitatem, alterum ad supplicii acerbiteriam adtinet. Ac erroribus quidem ipsis nihil possit absurdius esse, sanus nemo est qui dubitat, mirorque tam sæda opinionum portenta in quosquam potuisse Christianos cadere. Sed ita habet humanæ infirmitatis conditio, si divina paululum luce destituti nobis relinquimur, quo non ruimus præcipites? Atque hoc nomine Christo gratias quam maximas habeo, quod Anglorum hodie neminem huic insanix affinem video. Quod igitur ad phanaticas istas sectas attinet, eas certe in republica nullo modo fovendas esse, sed idonea comprimendas correc-

tione censeo. Verum enim vero ignibus
 ac flammis pice ac sulphure æstuantibus
 viva miserorum corpora torrefacere, iudicii
 magis cœcitate quam impetu voluntatis
 errantium, durum istud ac Romani ma-
 gis exempli esse quam evangelicæ con-
 suetudinis videtur, ac plane ejusmodi, ut
 nisi a Romanis pontificibus, authore In-
 nocentio tertio, primum profluxisset, nun-
 quam istum Perilli taurum quisquam in-
 mitem Christi ecclesiam importavisset.
 Non quod maleficiis delecter, aut errori-
 bus cujusquam faveam, dicta hæc esse ve-
 lim; vitæ hominum, ipse homo cum sim,
 faveo; ideoque faveo, non ut erret, sed
 ut resipiscat: ac neque hominum solum,
 utinam et pecudibus ipsis opitulari possem.
 Ita enim sum, (stulte fortassis hæc de meip-
 so, at vere dico,) macellum ipsum, ubi
 mactantur etiam pecudes, vix prætereo,
 quin tacito quodam doloris sensu mens re-
 fugiat. Atque equidem in eo Dei ipsius
 valde admiror, venerorque toto pectore
 clementiam, qui in jumentis illis brutis et
 abjectis, quæ sacrificiis olim parabantur, id
 prospexerat, ne prius ignibus mandarentur
 quam sanguis eorum ad basim altaris effun-

deretur

deretur. Unde disceremus, in exigendis suppliciis, quamvis justis, non quid omnino rigori liceat, sed ut clementia simul adhibita rigoris temperet asperitatem.

Quamobrem si tantum mihi apud principis tanti majestatem audere liceret supplex pro Christo rogarem clementissimam hanc regiae sublimitatis excellentiam, pro autoritate hac *mea* (*lege tua*) qua ad vitam multorum *consecrandum pellere* (l. conservandam pollere) te divina voluit clementia, ut vitæ si fieri possit, (quid enim non posset iis in rebus autoritas tua?) miserorum parcatur, saltem ut horrori obsistatur, atque in aliud quodcunque commutetur supplicii genus. Sunt ejectiones, inclusiones retrusæ, sunt vincula, sunt perpetua exilia, sunt stigmata et *πλήγματα* aut etiam patibula; id unum valde deprecor, ne piras ac flammæ Smithfieldianas jam diu faustissimis tuis auspiciis huc usque sopitas, finas nunc recandescere. Quod si ne id quidem obtineri possit, id saltem omnibus supplicandi modis efflagito; *ἔγχετο τὸ πελαργικὸν* pectoris tui implorans, ut menssem tamen unum aut alterum nobis concedas, quo interim experiamur, an a

periculosis erroribus dederit dominus ut
resanescant, ne cum corporum jactura, ani-
mæ pariter cum corporibus de ætérno peri-
clitentur exitio *.

* Fuller's Church History of Britain.—p. 104,
105.

N U M B E R II*.

A CONFESSION OF FAITH OF THE WALDENEES, EXTRACTED OUT OF CHARLES DU MOULIN DE LA MON. DES FRANÇOIS, p. 65.

A R T I C L E I.

WE believe, that there is but One God, that he is a Spirit, Creatour of all things, God of all, who is over all and through all, and in us all, who ought to be worshiped in spirit and in truth, whom alone we serve, and to whom we give the glory of our life, food, raiment, health, sickness, prosperity, and adversity; and we love him as one who knoweth our hearts.

A R T. 2.

We believe that *Jesus Christ* is the Son and image of the Father. That in him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead; by whom we have knowledge of the Father. That he is our Mediator and Advocate. And that there is no other name under heaven given unto men, by which we can be saved; in whose name alone

* See page 175.

we call upon the Father, and use no other prayers than those which are contained in the holy scripture, or such other as are conformable to them for substance.

A R T. 3.

We believe that the Holy Spirit is our Comforter, proceeding from the Father and the Son ; by whose inspiration we make our prayers, being by him renewed, who works in us all good works, and by whom we have the knowledge of all truths.

A R T. 4.

We believe that there is one holy church, which is the congregation of all the elect and faithful ones from the very beginning of the world to the end, whereof our Saviour Christ is the head : the which is governed by his word, and conducted by his spirit, wherewith all good Christians ought to hold communion : for, she prays for all without ceasing, and the word which she hath is agreeable to God himself ; without which church no man can be saved.

A R T. 5.

We hold that the ministers of the church, as Bishops and Pastours, ought to be

be irreprehensible, as well in their life as doctrine. And that otherwise they ought to be deprived of their offices, and others substituted in their places. As likewise, that none ought to presume to take upon him this honour, but he who is called by God, as was Aaron, feeding the flock of God, not for the sake of dishonest gain, nor as having any lordship over the clergy, but as being sincerely an example to his flock, in word, in conversation, in charity, in faith, and in chastity.

A R T. 6.

We confess, that kings, princes, and governours, are ordained and established as ministers of God, whom we ought to obey. For they bear the sword for defence of the innocent, and for the punishment of evil doers, for which cause we are bound to give them honour, and to pay them tribute; from whose power none can exempt himself; it being likewise forbidden by our Lord Jesus Christ, who was willing to pay tribute, not pretending jurisdiction over the temporal powers.

ART. 7.

We believe, that in the sacrament of baptism, water is the visible and external sign, which represents unto us that which (by the invisible virtue of God operating) is within us; namely, the renovation of the spirit, and the mortification of our members in Jesus Christ; by which also we are received into the holy congregation of the people of God, there protesting and declaring openly our faith and amendment of life.

ART. 8.

We hold, that the holy sacrament of the table or supper of our Lord Jesus Christ is an holy commemoration and giving of thanks for the benefits which we have received by his death and passion; that we ought to assemble together in faith and charity, examining ourselves, and to eat *of that bread*, and communicate *of that his blood*, in the very same manner as he hath prescribed in the holy scripture.

ART. 9.

We confess that marriage is good, honourable, holy, and instituted by God himself;

self; which ought not to be prohibited to any person, provided that there be no hindrance specified by the word of God.

A R T. 10.

We confess, that those who fear God follow those things which are well pleasing to him, and do those works which he hath prepared to the end that we should walk in them; which are love, joy, peace, patience, meekness, goodness, brotherly kindness, temperance, and other the like works contained and commended in the holy scriptures.

A R T. 11.

On the contrary, we confess that we ought to take heed and beware of false teachers, whose scope and aim is to turn the people aside from the true worship, which belongs to our only God and Lord, and to lean upon creatures, and to trust in them: as likewise to forsake those good works which are contained and required in the holy scriptures, and to do those which are only invented by men.

We

A R T. 12.

We hold for the rule of our faith, the Old and New Testament, and agree to the general confession of faith, with the articles contained in the Apostles Creed, namely, “ I believe in God the Father Almighty,” &c*.

* Morland's history of the evangelical churches of the valleys of Piedmont, p. 37.

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MDCCLXXIV.

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THIS small Tract was drawn up solely for the use of a country-parish, and never intended to go beyond it :

BUT the kind reception it met with there, from an affectionate and grateful people, and their entering so intirely into the cause and subject of it ; added to the suggestion of serious friends, that it might be of some general use, has been an inducement to make it more public.

THE HISTORY OF THE

REIGN OF THE
KING OF GREAT BRITAIN
IN THE YEAR 1701

AND THE
REIGN OF THE
KING OF GREAT BRITAIN
IN THE YEAR 1702

AND THE
REIGN OF THE
KING OF GREAT BRITAIN
IN THE YEAR 1703

My Brethren, and Fellow Christians,

IT will be natural for you to inquire, how it should come to pass, that a minister, with whom you have lived on the best terms, should leave you and a situation many ways agreeable and beneficial to him, not only without any prospect of preferment, the usual motive for such changes, but the contrary.

As far as I can judge of myself, since I came among you, no preferment would have tempted me to a change; and I have assuredly never sought any other: but here I thought quietly to have ended my days.

It hath pleased God in his providence to order it otherwise. And his commands

B

are

are to be obeyed, and his will preferred, before every earthly consideration or advantage.

You are many of you no strangers to the cause of my short absences from you at different times, these two or three years past. You have heard that there was a design set on foot to move our governors, to lighten some burdens that are laid upon clergymen, when they enter upon a cure of souls, in requiring them to subscribe to the xxxix articles of our church, and declare their approbation of every thing in the common-prayer book as being agreeable to the word of God.

THE request humbly made to parliament was, that we might be required to subscribe to nothing but the Bible, the word of God, and not to the articles, or any form of prayer or worship drawn up by fallible men. And I have no doubt
but

but you of yourselves would think this sufficient, and that, as your ministers are to teach you nothing but the pure word of God, they ought not to be put upon subscribing to any thing else.

BUT you are farther to know, that some engaged in this petition to parliament, and myself among the rest, in hope that it would lead also to an amendment of many things in our liturgy or common-prayer book.

You will carefully distinguish here, that our holy religion itself, the religion of Christ, can never be amended. *That* is always invariably the same; always most perfect and compleat; and is contained in the inspired writings of the New Testament.

BUT the religion which men have made out of it, whether contained in the common-prayer book, or any other book, this

will be liable to errors and imperfections, and often want amendment.

AND thus at the reformation from popery, when our forefathers asserted the sufficiency of holy scripture unto salvation, and their right of interpreting it for themselves; they purged out of their liturgy or common-prayer book many idolatrous and superstitious practices, such as *praying to saints, viz. dead men and women; praying to the mass-God, or the bread in the sacrament; praying in Latin; the use of oil and spittle in baptism; extreme unction, or anointing dying persons with oil; lighting up candles on Candlemas-day; marking the forehead with ashes on Ash-Wednesday; with many the like idle fopperies and trumpery, which are still retained among the Papists, who are in no small number in your own parish, against whose seducing arts I beg you to be continually upon your guard.*

ENDEA-

ENDEAVOURS have been used, under several of our princes since, to render our common-prayer book more strictly agreeable to the holy scriptures, than it could be all at once at its first composing. And particularly about fourscore years ago, at the revolution, with the countenance of those pious princes, King William and Queen Mary, many great and excellent men, Archbishop *Tillotson*, Bishops *Patrick*, *Burnet*, and others, begun the good work, and made great progress in it ; but through the violent opposition of some factious persons, it came to nothing. From that time to this, no attempts have been made, nor any thing done by public authority ; through fear, perhaps, of creating disturbances in the state. Although, whenever the experiment is made, I doubt not but it will be found, that an improved liturgy, brought nearer the standard of holy scripture, would be generally acceptable

table to the nation, and contribute to the public peace, as well as to the promotion of true religion.

IN the mean time, the errors that call for amendment in the common-prayer book, give great pain to serious considerate men, zealous for the purity of God's worship. Lesser mistakes and faults in human things ought surely to be borne with; for there is nothing perfect here below. But where a man esteems any thing contrary to God's word, and sinful, though others may not so esteem it, he cannot, consistently with integrity, comply with it.

In this sinful light all those prayers appear to me, which are addressed to the Trinity, (as, O holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity) to Christ, to the Holy Ghost, or to any other person, but God himself. For our blessed Saviour always offered up prayer himself to God, his Father and our Father, his God and our God, John xx. 17. and he
also

also enjoined us to pray to the Father only ; Luke xi. 2. *When ye pray, say, Our Father, &c.* Many of the prayers in the liturgy are truly excellent, and quite agreeable to this rule and example of holy scripture. There are also many which are not so ; particularly in the litany ; which are immediately directed to Christ, and not to God. I cannot approve, or offer up such prayers myself ; or authorize them to be offered up by another for me. The case is different with regard to you, who have no authority in the church, who are only hearers, and do not lead the devotions of others. If you should disapprove of any part of the service which you hear, you can pass it over, and not join in it ; but your minister, by reading it, makes it more his own.

I CANNOT therefore continue in the use of such forms of worship which I believe to be sinful, without the guilt of continual

tinual insincerity before God, and endangering the loss of his favour for ever. For he *requireth truth in the inward parts*, Psalm li. 6. an entire rectitude of heart. He will in no case dispense with the habitual neglect of truth and uprightness, and least of all in our solemn prayers and addresses to himself.

To leave a station of ease and affluence, and to have to combat with various straits and hardships of an uncertain world, is but a dark prospect. But we must willingly submit to this hard lot, when not to be avoided without deserting our duty to God and his truth. And we have great encouragement given us by our divine Master and Saviour Christ. Matthew x. 32. " Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father which is in heaven." And Mark x. 29, 30. " Verily I say unto you, there is
no

no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake and the gospel's, but he shall receive an hundred fold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the world to come, eternal life." It is of small concern in what outward circumstances we pass over the short term of life, if we can but obtain that blessed approbation in the end,—“ Well done good and faithful servant ; — enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.” Matthew xxv. 23.

It is a great satisfaction, at this my departure from you, that I can truly say, “ I have coveted no man's silver, nor gold, nor apparel.” *Acts* xx. 33. In nothing have I made a gain of you, or sought to enrich myself, nor am I enriched by you at all, but what was over and above the supply of necessary wants, has been freely
C expended

expended in the various ways, in which it was thought might be most useful for your present benefit and future happiness. I have not sought *Yours*, but *You*. And although humbled before God under a sense of many failings and neglects, yet in some low degree, I hope I may say, that, “ in
 “ simplicity and godly sincerity we have
 “ had our conversation in the world, and
 “ more abundantly towards you.” 2 *Cor.*
 i. 12.

I HAVE endeavoured to teach you the truth which Christ our Lord taught, as far as I was able to learn it, by an impartial and diligent search of the holy scriptures. And I often reminded you, that you were not to believe any thing because spoken by me, but to examine and compare how far it was agreeable to holy scripture, our only rule and guide. And my discourses, of late years, have been altogether expositions of large portions of the

New

New Testament, with such inferences as naturally and plainly flowed from them, that you might see it was the word of God which was endeavoured to be spoken to you, and not the word of man.

IN these discourses I was led continually to point out to you, that religion lay not in outward forms and ordinances even of God's own appointment, though they be helps to it ; but in an entire conversion and devotedness of the heart to God, influencing to sobriety, chastity, brotherly love, kindness, integrity, in all your conversation ; to do every thing out of a sense of duty to God ever present with and supporting us in life, and chiefly for his infinite love to us in Christ Jesus our Lord, by whom he *he hath called us unto his eternal glory*, 1 Pet. v. 10. And that this inward sense of God carried along with you into your daily labours and business, would sanctify them all to you, preserve you in-

nocent and holy, sweeten the unavoidable toils and cares of the present life, and enable you to resign it with joy and in peace.

I HAVE often pressed upon you the duty of family-religion. — That every house should be a little church as it were, wherein all the members of it were carefully instructed in the things of God, and once at least, at the close of each day, called together to join in short prayer to God, since in your way of business you can seldom meet all together at any other time without inconvenience. This would be a constant check upon parents in their daily conduct, and would make them hasten home with pleasure after their labours were over, to worship God in their families, which would thus become orderly and happy. And this might be a means of preventing that early depravity and corruption of the youth of both sexes, which is so alarming, and from which they are seldom to be

be recovered, when once you have lost this season of instruction, and of forming habits of piety and virtue. “Train up a child in the way he should go : and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” Prov. xxii. 6.

STILL more have I inculcated upon you the necessity of keeping the *Lord's-day* holy, in obedience to God's primary law, when he first placed man upon the earth, never repealed since, and which was regulated anew, and confirmed by the authority and example of our Saviour Christ and his apostles :—As many of each family as can be allowed, to attend the public worship of the Great Creator and heavenly Father, and to be mindful afterwards of a suitable employment of your time at home. For spending one part of this sacred day in unnecessary worldly cares, or in sports and diversions, tends to efface every serious impression made on the mind on the
other

other part, and by degrees leads to spend the whole of it in the same ungodly sort. Not that the service of God is to make us morose, or sad and uncheerful at this or at any time. There are ways of passing this holy day, in walking out and contemplating the works of God, in pleasing charitable offices to our neighbours, and in innocent useful conversation, which will cheer and refresh both mind and body, far beyond those noisy and riotous games, always accompanied with profane oaths, and generally ending in the alehouse or worse.

A WRITER of great note, though no clergyman, remarks ;

“ I BELIEVE it may be laid down as a
 “ certain fact, that no master or mistress
 “ of a family can have a true concern for
 “ religion, or be a child of God, who
 “ does not take care to worship God by
 “ family-

“ family prayer.” — *Hartley on Man*,
vol. ii. p. 336.

To which I would add, that I have seldom found any serious religion in a parish or family, where the Lord's day was customarily prophaned. And, as he concludes—“ Let the observation of the fact determine” in both cases.

It has been matter of deep concern to me, that I have not seen so much of the fruits of my labours as I desired among you. Parents, ignorant themselves, and refusing instruction, must of course neglect all godly care of their children. Very seldom do farmers meet at markets on their worldly business without giving more or less into drunken excesses, which shews, that they are under the restraint of no religious principle. Much bad practice and open sin is visible in many.—But I would not now complain. Let us all
make

make haste to repent and amend—for the time is short. I would hope that more good may have been done than I know of, and that there are more truly pious than the few that appear to be so: and that some seed of the word, that has been sown, may hereafter spring up, and bear good fruit.

It will be your wisdom, and happy for you, and a cause of rejoicing to me, if from this time forwards your lives be conducted with such Christian sobriety and watchfulness, in a daily progressive improvement in virtue and holiness, that I might be able to say, “ I have laboured, “ and another hath entered into my “ labours,” John iv. 38. and that the work of my successor may be made more easy to him from what you have learned of me. More especially if it should please the *God of all grace*, 1 *Pet.* v. 10. that as Samson served his country more at his death,

death, than in his life, you also may be more benefited by this my last farewell exhortation to you, than by what I have laboured in much weakness, but great sincerity, for the ten years that I have been with you.

Soon shall all the friendships and connections of this world be dissolved, and at an end. The parting, and the separation, which death must have made betwixt us in a few years, perhaps much sooner, is only anticipated a little. And it may be a providential blessing to both you and me, if I may but thereby be approved, and found faithful unto the end, for which I desire the help of your prayers; and if this my voluntary dismissal of myself from my station and ministry among you, to which I am constrained by a principle of conscience and obedience to Christ, as I firmly believe, may contribute to convince you,

D

THAT

THAT the gospel of Jesus is the truth of God—the pearl of great price, *Matth.* xiii. 45. for which we are to be willing to part with every thing rather than fail of obtaining it : to induce you

To do nothing now, which you shall not approve at that solemn hour when you leave the world :

AND to be ready at all times, and even desirous to have the common-prayer book reformed, and the public worship of God in it made more conformable to the holy scriptures, for your own sakes, and that of your conscientious Pastors, whenever it shall please God, in his providence, to incline our gracious Prince and Parliament to set about so needful a work.

AND now, O Holy Father, *the blessed and only potentate*, in conformity to what I believe thy will and my duty, I resign un-
to

to thee, from whom I received them, my ministry and people. Do thou raise up unto them a faithful teacher, who shall more effectually preach thy word, turn many from sin, and bring all nearer to thee, their only portion and happiness. And graciously dispose of me, thine unworthy servant, where and how I may best be enabled to serve thee according to the pure gospel of thy son, through whom I desire to find acceptance with thee, now and for ever.

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IN A SERMON, PREACHED AT THE CHURCH OF ST. MARY, LONDON, ON SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 1781.

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T H E

PRAYER before the SERMON.*

*U*NTO thee do we lift up our eyes, O thou that dwellest in the Heavens!

O Lord, the great and glorious God, who hast made all things, and sustaineſt and orderest all things by thy wiſe and good providence; who givest wiſdom to all that ask it of thee; to whom alone we look up for a bleſſing, and ſucceſs on all that we take in hand.

We beſeech thee to look down upon us thy creatures and ſervants, who have here aſſembled ourſelves together as the diſciples of thy ſon Jeſus Chriſt, to edify one another in thy holy word; and to render unto thee, O thou moſt high, that ſupreme worſhip, reverence, and praiſe, which are only due unto thee: *For thou art God alone; and beſide thee there is no other.*

May we be found among thy true worſhippers; ſuch as *thou ſeekeſt to worſhip thee*; and make us ever mindful of that *pure and undefiled Religion before thee our God and Father*, which thou haſt told us, conſiſteth in acts of mercy and kindneſs, and in *keeping ourſelves unſpotted from the world.*

* The prayers before and after the ſermon were by no means intended to have been made public; but are printed at the requeſt of ſome of the hearers.

Increase the number of thy faithful Ministers, whose honourable employ it is to bring men to know thee, and the way to eternal life.

Particularly assist thine unworthy servant, whom by a singular providence thou hast called to be a teacher of thy holy gospel in this place. May he *take heed unto himself, and his doctrine; studying to shew himself approved of thee, and furnished to every good work.* Enlighten him more and more with the knowledge of thy truth; and enable him to speak it with all boldness, that he may not shun to declare the whole counsel of God to others, as he shall learn it himself.

Give success to his labours, that he may *make full proof of his ministry; and save himself and those that hear him!* that some may be often called away from the too eager pursuit of a vain world that profiteth not; if any live in wilful sin, dishonesty, or vicious practice, that they may repent and be converted; and that we all may become more acquainted with thee and our duty, and better fitted to act our part in this trying uncertain world, with integrity, patience and fortitude: and that thus doing thy will on earth, and being found faithful in our several stations, we may, in the end, have our place in that kingdom of glory and happiness to which thou hast called us by Jesus Christ our Lord.

EPHESIANS iv. 3.

Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

HAD the benevolent doctrine of the gospel produced the fruits that might have been expected in the lives of its Professors, they would have been as remarkable for their love to each other as they have been too often for the contrary disposition; and what was said of the first disciples of Jesus, would have been verified of their successors to the end of time; *Lo, how these Christians love one another!*

Love to all, even to enemies the most cruel and injurious, is bound upon us by that most engaging motive; *That we may be the children of our Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. Matth. v. 45.*

Much more then are we to love those, who are kindly disposed towards us; our brethren, and fellow disciples of the same Saviour; be their religious opinions ever so different from our own. For thereby they do us no injury; and if in error the most blind and wilful, they are not accountable to us for it, and they only will suffer by continuing in it.

It was by this agreement in charity, and not so much in religious opinions, that our Lord

was desirous his followers should be distinguished from all other men; where he says, John xiii. 35. *By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.*

His apostles, and first disciples, kept their Master's words in remembrance, diligently observed them, and taught them to others. Charity, peace, and union amongst Believers, is the pleasing theme they are continually dwelling upon; the burden of all their Writings. The exhortation of St. Paul before us, relates primarily and more immediately to the Ephesian Converts to whom he addresses it. But it is no less suited to all others, who in their respective circumstances are to endeavour to *keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.*

The unity of the Spirit, as appeareth from the context; was the kindness and harmony amongst Christians, their just deference for each other, and regard for the common good, at that time, *when Believers were very generally favoured with extraordinary gifts of the holy Spirit.* And since those miraculous powers have been withdrawn, which happened very soon, *the unity of the Spirit*, is the kind affection, good order, and attention to mutual edification, which ought to subsist among those who profess the doctrine of Christ, *which was dictated by the same holy Spirit of God:* Something above the purest friendships of this world, as much as the motives, views and excellence of the gospel, surpassed the wisdom of man:

an endeavour to make all those wise and virtuous with whom we are connected, and thereby to qualify ourselves with them, for perfect and durable felicity.

We shall be able to learn more particularly the nature of this *unity of the Spirit*; to which our apostle exhorts, by attending to the way in which it is to be preserved; namely, *in the bond of peace*.

I.

It is a maxim of undoubted truth, that in their religious capacity, mankind are subject only to the authority of God, and of their own consciences. Another may suggest arguments and motives to prevail upon us to relinquish sentiments that he sees to be erroneous and dangerous; and to embrace his own. And to do this is oftentimes a duty for some persons; and a part of christian charity in all. But there the matter is to rest. The success of such charitable endeavours is to be left to the force of persuasion; and no other force is to be used. To act otherwise, and to compell to an outward religious profession, when there is no inward approbation and willingness, is to violate the most sacred rights of conscience, and break that bond of peace, by which alone, rational beings, of capacities and attainments infinitely diversified, and independent of each other in religious matters, can live in unity together. A spirit of dominion however, and tyranny over conscience, soon began to discover itself among Christians; and still conti-

nues to hold the greatest part of them in all countries, under the most abject slavery. The evil might have been prevented, if the apostle's argument for christian unity, immediately following the words of the text, had been attended to and regarded. *There is one body* (says he) *and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling: One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.* Eph. iv. 4, 5, 6. i. e. All Christians are equal, and upon a level in the things that concern their salvation. No one is to dictate with authority to another. For they are all *One body*, as it were; consisting indeed of *divers members*; some more useful, and therefore *more* honourable than others: but no one *head*, or Lord of another: all under the direction of *One Spirit, one rule of faith, and one Lord* Jesus Christ, the author of that faith, and dispenser of that spirit and power of God, and *head of his body*, the church; himself subordinate to, and receiving all his powers from the One God and Father of all.

For any man therefore to put his own sense upon the words of Christ and of the holy Spirit, and require others to accept that sense only and subscribe to the truth of it; is to set up his spirit and wisdom against the holy spirit and wisdom of God, and to usurp the province of Christ, the sole law-giver and head of his church. We may give out explanations and illustrations of the holy scriptures; and re-commend

commend them to others: but we are not to require or expect them to be embraced by others but as they shall be found by them to be agreeable to that holy scripture, whose true meaning we endeavour to point out.

In the *word* of God, as in his *works*, there are treasures of wisdom still unexplored, We are commanded to *search for wisdom*.—Prov. (2 Peter i. 5.) to *add knowlege* to all the other christian virtues; and by no means to lock up our * mind and reasonable powers at any time, and shut out further information and improvement. Neither may numbers of Christians in society tie themselves up against receiving additional light and knowlege, by framing articles of faith, from which they are never to recede. Much less are churches or societies of Christians in one age to fetter and confine all future generations of men and societies of Christians, from seeing farther into

* “ Studious and inquisitive men, commonly at such an age, at forty or fifty at the utmost, have fixed and settled their judgments in most points, and, as it were, *made their last understandings*; supposing that they have thought, or read, or heard, what can be said on all sides of things; and after this, they grow positive and impatient of contradiction, thinking it a disparagement to them to alter their judgment. But our deceased friend was so wise, as to be willing to learn to the last; knowing that no man can grow wiser without some change of his mind, without gaining some knowledge which he had not, or correcting some error that he had before.”

Tillotson's sermon at the funeral of Dr. Whichcote.

It is hard to say, whether this sentiment doth more honour to Dr. *Whichcote*, or to the wise and humble Archbishop, who reports it with so much satisfaction.

the

the intent of God's word, and interpreting it differently from themselves : a conduct this, as common among private Christians, and churches, in all ages, as it is tyrannical and reproachful. As the servants of God, and disciples of Christ, we can only submit to the authority of Christ in his his written word ; and in the sense we ourselves put upon it, and not that of another.

II.

But it has been the doctrine of too many, in all periods of the Christian church, that peace and unity are not to be attained, unless you bring all Christians to be of one opinion in religion.

Uniformity of opinion is of specious sound, and very imposing on weak minds, who look no farther than the surface of things. But Almighty God could never make that the only way to peace and unity, which is in itself impracticable and impossible to such creatures as we are : and the very appearance of which cannot be kept up without the loss of what is infinitely more valuable, of virtue and integrity ; without tempting many to make no use at all of their understandings, or to dissemble their better knowledge. For our opinions are not in our own power. They depend upon the light and evidence with which truth is presented to our minds. And this appears so differently to different men, through the diversity of their prejudices, natural abilities, and means of improvement ; that it cannot

cannot be but we must differ widely in our judgments concerning many things, on a subject of such compass and variety, as that of revealed religion. And you may as well require all mankind to be of the same size and complexion, as of the same sentiment in all those respects, which you perhaps shall think important. For the one is as little in their power, and as unlikely to be attained as the other.

III.

When other arguments have failed, holy scripture has been pressed into the hard service of enslaving mankind to one system of religious opinions : though such system oftentimes far from agreeing with holy scripture ; oft in direct opposition to it.

Thus because St. Paul exhorts 2 Cor. xiii. 11. *to be of one mind* : and in another place, 1 Cor. i. 10. *I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you ; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and the same judgment.* Hence it is inferred, that there ought to be no difference in opinion amongst Christians : but that they ought to be all of *the same mind, and the same judgment* ; at least in *fundamental points of faith*, as they are usually distinguished.

We shall in vain search the New Testament for fundamental points of faith, one only excepted, the belief of which is indeed necessary for every Christian ; namely, that *Jesus is the Christ,*

Christ, the son of God. Without this no one can be a Christian. And he that sincerely believes this, will believe and do every thing else, that Jesus taught and commanded. Our Saviour and his apostles, tell us not any thing of that long catalogue of other necessary articles of faith, commonly insisted on. These are generally, either misapplications of holy scripture ill understood; or obscure, uncertain deductions from it, about which good men may well hold different sentiments. So that it might weaken the divine authority and inspiration of the apostle, to suppose him requiring men to be of one mind and judgment in points of so much doubtfulness and obscurity. But the case is far different. St. Paul, in this place, did very properly require of the Corinthian Christians, a strict obedience to those directions for their religious conduct, which he had clearly and sufficiently made known to them, and to be of *one mind and judgment* in those matters. Submitting to the authority of the apostle, was submitting to the authority of God himself, from whom he received it. But this can be no rule for other men, who have no authority to demand an implicit submission to their decrees.

It will moreover be found, that in these and the like warm exhortations to unanimity, the view of the apostle was to prevent unnecessary disputes, and the spirit of faction amongst the brethren, and not to enforce an exact uniformity of religious opinion and practice.

practice. For, at other times, he allows a latitude and variety. Thus, *Rom. xiv.* he candidly admits and allows the scruples of some Jewish Believers, in continuing to observe their new moons and sabbaths; and in forbearing to eat animal food at public entertainments, lest they should taste such things as were forbidden by the law of Moses, which they still held obligatory to themselves.

IV.

Since then an uniformity of opinion in the things of religion is not to be attained, nor is required of us; it follows, that God never designed that Christians should be all of one sentiment, or formed into one great church, as we speak: but that there should be different sects of Christians, and different churches. This, I say, plainly appears to be the appointment of God, however many have been led away to think and act as if it were not so.

After our Lord's apostles were dead, the divine instructions which they left in writing would be thought to admit of various interpretations; and different judgments and conclusions from them would be formed concerning many points both of doctrine and discipline; of the manner of conducting divine worship, of administering baptism and the Lord's supper, and the like. Some would be content with what was more plain and simple; and keep as near as possible to the language, rule, and example of Christ, and his apostles. Others would speculate farther, and mix more

of their own wisdom with that of the gospel: with no ill design at first, but thinking that such additions and enlargements tended to edification; yet thus making a bad precedent for after-times. And in this sort, different sects, and churches, or worshipping societies of Christians would be formed: all professing to follow the same rule of holy scripture; but following it in different ways according to their own apprehensions. Each would possess a right of adhering to their own sentiments, and method of worshipping God, without controul, so long as they did not disturb the public peace. And in the midst of these differences and varieties, *the unity of the spirit was still to be kept in the bond of peace*; by a brotherly affection, and friendly correspondence one with another.

V.

While this friendly benevolent temper is cultivated towards each other, the different sects and churches amongst Christians, far from being a hurt or discredit to religion, are an honour and of singular service to it.

For thus a spirit of enquiry into the grounds of their common faith and dissent from each other, is excited and kept alive. They are prevented from sinking into a criminal indolence and indifference in a matter of such high importance as that of religion; and from the two bad extremes of rejecting or receiving it, without due examination. But like those persons, whom St. Luke so highly commends,

Acts xvii. 11. *they search the scriptures daily, whether those things are true*; and 1 Pet. iii. 15. *are ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh them a reason of the hope that is in them.* This rational satisfaction about the grounds of their religion and their duty, is what the bulk of mankind are capable of attaining no less than the philosopher.* And
the

* There is an admirable passage in proof of this, in Mr. LOCKE's *Reasonableness of Christianity as delivered in the scriptures*; where this true philosopher and christian has shewn, that *the use of reason in religion is not to be denied to any part of mankind*; and how far all are capable of it. "The bulk of mankind (saith that excellent person) have not leisure nor capacity for demonstration; nor can carry a train of proofs; which in that way they must always depend upon for conviction, and cannot be required to assent till they see the demonstration. Wherever they stick, the teachers are always put upon proof, and must clear the doubt by a thread of coherent deductions from the first principle, how long, or how intricate soever that be. And you may as soon hope to have all the day-labourers and tradesmen, the spinsters and dairy-maids perfect mathematicians, as to have them perfect in *Ethicks* this way. Hearing plain commands, is the sure and only course to bring them to obedience and practice. The greatest part cannot know, and therefore they must believe. And I ask, whether one coming from heaven in the power of God, in full and clear evidence and demonstration of miracles, giving plain and direct rules of morality and obedience, be not likelier to enlighten the bulk of mankind, and set them right in their duties, and bring them to do them, than by reasoning with them from general notions, and principles of human reason? And were all the duties of life clearly demonstrated; yet I conclude, when well considered, that method of teaching men their duties, would be thought proper only for a few, who had much leisure, improved understandings, and were used to abstract reasonings. But the in-
struction

the Christian thus formed, whose life agrees with his holy profession, is the brightest ornament to it.

In the first ages also of our faith, and long time afterwards, before printing was discovered, those numerous sects and churches into which Christians were divided, were, under divine providence, instrumental in preserving the holy scriptures pure and unadulterated.

“ instruction of the people were best still to be left to the precepts
 “ and principles of the gospel. The healing of the sick, the re-
 “ storing of sight to the blind by a word, the raising, and
 “ being raised from the dead, are matters of fact, which
 “ they can without difficulty conceive; and that he who
 “ does such things, must do them by the assistance of a di-
 “ vine power. These things lye level to the ordinariest ap-
 “ prehension. He that can distinguish between sick and well,
 “ lame and sound, dead and alive, is capable of this doc-
 “ trine. To one who is once persuaded that Jesus Christ
 “ was sent by God to be a king, and a Saviour of those
 “ who do believe in him; all his commands become prin-
 “ ciples: There needs no other proof for the truth of what
 “ he says, but that he said it. And then there needs no
 “ more but to read the inspired books, to be instructed: All
 “ the duties of morality lye there clear, and plain, and easy
 “ to be understood. And here I appeal, whether this be
 “ not the surest, the safest, and most effectual way of teach-
 “ ing: Especially if we add this farther consideration; that
 “ *as it suits the lowest capacities of reasonable creatures, so it*
 “ *reaches and satisfies, nay, enlightens the highest.* And the
 “ most elevated understandings cannot but submit to the au-
 “ thority of this doctrine as divine; which coming from the
 “ mouths of a company of illiterate men, hath not only the
 “ attestation of miracles, but reason to confirm it; since
 “ they delivered no precepts but such, as though reason of
 “ itself had not clearly made out; yet it could not but assent
 “ to when thus discovered; and think itself indebted for the
 “ discovery.” *Locke’s Reasonableness of Christianity, &c.*
 p. 279, 280, 281.

Their zeal for their respective opinions would prompt them to multiply copies of those sacred books ; and would also lead them to keep a watchful eye, and be a check on each other, that they did not falsify or corrupt them, in favour of their particular systems.

In process of time indeed, one great, pretended, catholic church, did attempt to swallow up and destroy all the rest, and force all Christians to be of one mind ; and for many long ages nearly succeeded in her attempt. The grossest darkness, ignorance and idolatry, accompanied with the most enormous wickedness, were the natural consequence of such a *constrained dead uniformity*, of debarring men from the use of their understandings in the things of God. And, had not those days been shortened, gospel light and truth must have perished out of the world.

In later times, great benefits have been derived to true religion, from those who have refused to submit to the impositions of civil and ecclesiastical authority in matters of faith ; and who, on that principle, have had the virtue and courage to depart from the established forms in their several countries, to worship God in the way they believed most acceptable to him. Their conduct has led many to think favourably of and enquire into the reality and importance of the evidences for christianity ; and their noble pleas for themselves and for the liberty of worshipping God according to their consciences, have opened the eyes of not a

few to see the necessity of allowing to others what each claimed for themselves. And until the several public establishments of religion shall be more simplified; *the only true God, the Father*, acknowledged and worshipped according to the teaching of the holy scriptures, and all authority over conscience disowned; it must be of infinite service to piety, integrity, and the gospel, that the numbers of Dissenters from such establishments should remain and increase.

VI.

Nor can it with truth be said, though it often hath been said, that different sects of religion in a country, have a tendency to disturb the public peace and quiet. On the contrary, as far as they conduce to make men better Christians, which they do in a great degree, they contribute to make them more useful and peaceable members of society.

But it must not be dissimbled, for it cannot be disowned, that the disputes and contentions of Christians with each other, have been the source of the most lasting animosities, and caused great miseries and disturbances in the world.

But let not the mild and gentle doctrine of the gospel be therefore slandered, and charged with these evils; which breathes no other spirit but that of kindness and benevolence, and requires it of all who come under its discipline. Let those rather bear the blame, the civil powers, the princes and states of this world, who have
given

given life and importance to these disputes, that would otherwise have died away of themselves, by interfering with them : who instead of affording protection to all the parties, have lent their aid to one to molest and destroy the other : who for ends of ambition and lawless power, have courted the most numerous and powerful sects in their respective countries, pouring in wealth, and honours, and authority upon them, whilst they have generally deprived the inferior number of fortunes, and life, and liberty more precious than life. Can it be wondered, that such oppression has made men mad ? that such partial, iniquitous proceedings have kindled wars and tumults, and set the world in a flame ? Let but the civil governors, the princes and kings of the earth, act the same part over again, and make themselves parties to all the religious disputes of their subjects, throwing the weight of their authority and favour into the scale of one side to the depression of the other, and the same wild scenes in proportion would return and be renewed.

But wise experience has taught them a better lesson. A happier state of things we preface is advancing : when it shall no longer be the road to honours and great wealth for ministers of religion to be vehement in contending for opinions doubtful in themselves and of little use or importance, save that they have once been established : But the honour and reward will be to those who have most laboured

to make themselves and others wise and good : When the civil magistrate shall no more say to those who have a just claim to his protection and favour ; *You shall not enjoy the privileges and benefits of good subjects, unless you worship God as I do ; or as my Priest directs you to do.* But all shall enjoy alike protection from the state, who give alike security for their obedience to it.

To the honour of our gracious Sovereign and the government under which we have the happiness to live ; let it be observed, that although not a few amongst us, lye undeserv- edly under the terror of *severe**, *unjust*, *pe- nal laws, made in bad and dark times.* Yet these laws sleep : they are never put in ex- ecution : they are almost universally reprobated and condemned. The growing enlightened spirit of the nation ; the spirit of the times, and the wisdom, justice, and candour of the British legislature, are a pledge to us, that such laws whose edge is turned only against

* “ By 9 and 10 W. III. c. 32. If any person educated
 “ in, or having made profession of the christian religion,
 “ shall be convicted in any of the courts of Westminster, or
 “ at the assizes, *of denying any one of the persons of the Holy*
 “ *Trinity to be God, &c.* he shall for the *first* offence, be
 “ judged incapable of any office ; and for the *second* offence,
 “ shall be disabled to sue any action, or to be guardian,
 “ executor, or administrator, or to take any legacy or deed of
 “ gift, or to bear any office, civil or military, or benefice
 “ ecclesiastical, for ever, and also shall suffer imprisonment
 “ for three years.”

the most conscientious men, shall e'er long be repealed.

In the mean while, if the above reasoning be solid and convincing, it may yield us a full satisfaction, that those who withdraw themselves from the established worship of their country, to worship God in a way more agreeable to his will, as they apprehend, are thus not only approving themselves to him whose favour is to be sought above all things: but do also thereby demonstrate themselves good citizens and useful subjects of the state, not inferior to any others; whilst they are studious to keep *the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*; and live in perfect charity, and the exchange of all friendly and benevolent offices with their brethren from whom they separate on a religious account and principle of conscience.

VII.

But to draw towards a conclusion; and address myself immediately to those who are, or shall be united in christian society with us.

Far will it be from my purpose ever to treat of controversial matters from this place, though something in vindication of our present conduct and right of assembling ourselves here together, was now judged proper to be laid before you.

The design of churches or congregations of Christians, is to join together in the public worship of Almighty God, a duty of high-

est concernment; and to promote each others salvation more effectually than could have been done by Individuals alone. And therefore, though we are still, as we can, to endeavour that *all men may be saved, and come unto the knowlege of the truth*: we are under an especial obligation and nearer tye to those with whom we are thus voluntarily united; to be helpful to each other in the concerns of a future world; *to watch over one another, and to excite unto love and to good works; that we may be the salt of the earth; lights of the world; and that our light may so shine before men that they may see our good works, and glorify our Father which is in heaven.*

This end, we have, my brethren, in common with all christian societies; and this is the most important end of all, and principally to be regarded.

But added to this, there is another end peculiar to us and reason of forming ourselves into a separate congregation, distinct from that of our national church; and this is, that we may be at liberty *to worship * God alone,*
after

* Our Saviour Christ was the most constant and devout worshipper of God; *his Father and our Father* (Joh. xx. 17) *his God and our God*: Mark i. 35, John vi. 11, Luke x. 21, xxii. 41, in which last he uses the humblest posture of body to denote his profound reverence of the most high God, his Father.

When he was under his *temptation*, or preparatory trial, before his entrance on his public ministry; he gave the following

after the command and example of our Saviour Christ. So that if any ask what we are

lowing answer to the Tempter; *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.* Matth. iv. 10.

At another time, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased; one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray—and he said unto them; when ye pray, say; *Our Father, which art in heaven,* Luke xi. 1, 2. Upon a request so solemn and interesting as this of his apostles, who were to be the future instructors of mankind; had there been any other object or objects of worship but the heavenly Father, our Lord would have told them of it distinctly and stated it with all exactness, as an omission here must necessarily mislead them and their converts for ever. But quite silent concerning any other, he answers them by giving them a form or model of prayer, which is addressed to the Father, and to him alone. This therefore is a case, where the omission of any other objects of worship is an utter exclusion of them.

Upon another occasion, he declares, who are the true worshipers; and who it is, they worshiped; namely *GOD, THE FATHER*, only. *Believe me—the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth: For the Father seeketh such to worship him.* John iv. 23.

He never set himself up to be the *true God, the Father*; or to be worshipped as God: But, the *son of the Father*, and the *messenger of God*.

The Psalmist says, Ps. lxxv. 2. *O thou that hearest prayer, (or O hearer of prayer) unto thee shall all flesh come!* Is there any other that heareth prayer? or can hear it? Did the Lord Jesus discover any other; or say that he himself was the *God that heareth prayer*?

Our Lord's precept and example in this most important respect, ought surely to be regarded by his followers. I see not how it can be got over. How can I erect him into another most high God, and make him the object of religious worship, when he himself most expressly commands me to pray to the Father only; when he himself sets me this example of praying to the Father only?

The force of this reasoning is not in the least abated by the observation, that *worship* is frequently paid to Christ in

are, or for what purpose we are joined together in a christian society; our answer is, with the apostle, “ we are a people, *that worship God in the spirit, and make our boast in Christ Jesus.*” Philip. iii. 3.

the holy scriptures; and also ordered to be paid to him, as *Hebr. i. 6. Let all the angels of God worship him.* But this is not religious worship. The attentive student of the sacred writings well knows that *worship* is a relative term, of different signification according to the subject to which it is applied. When ascribed to Kings or persons in authority (1 Chron. xxix. 20.) it implies the honour due to their station and character. When ascribed to the Lord Jesus, it is the honour due to him *whom God hath exalted for his excellent virtue and obedience, and given him a name above every name.* Philip ii. 9. and *worship* when ascribed to God, is that highest reverence and honour, of which invocation by prayer is a principal part; which belongs to the *Omnipresent God* alone, and is uncommunicated, if not utterly incommunicable to any other.

T H E

PRAYER after the SERMON.

WE have all reason to thank thee, O Lord our God, for that perfect rule and way of life and our duty, which thou hast taught us by our Lord Jesus Christ ; wherein thou hast graciously consulted our present peace and enjoyment, as thou hast most munificently provided for our future happiness.

For nothing is there wanting, O thou kind Father of men, to turn this earth again into Paradise, and make us completely blessed, but to copy after that character of thyself which thou hast set before us for our imitation, and obey the precepts of thy Son which lead us to it.

For thou, who art in thine own nature, love and goodness absolute ; hast commanded us to love and to do good to all, that we may be *thy children*, perfect, and resembling thee in our degree, as thou, *our Father in Heaven, art perfect*.

Thou commandest not hard things ; or that are too high for us : but only to love one another with an affection steady, rational, manly, and virtuous ; and to be happy.

Wretched, unworthy creatures are we ; that will not comply with so easy a rule of so kind a master.

Remove at last those bars, which we have put to our own happiness : that proud conceit and ignorance, which stamps such undue value on ourselves and our opinions, and would have all others bend to us ; which leads us to place a vain merit in a faith which is nothing more than an easy credulity ; and a religion, pretending to come from thee, yet void of charity.

Preserve us also from blind, intemperate zeal ; and the rage of dealing out rash and uncharitable judgments concerning the future condition of others, who may differ in some things from us ; lest we be guilty of invading thy awful prerogative, to whom alone the heart of man is known ; and who only hast power to save and to destroy.

But implant in our hearts a temper of benevolence and charity ; *charity* mild and gentle to all ; *which thinketh no evil ; which beareth all things ; believeth all things ; hopeth all things* : That this divine temper being rooted in us, and our whole character molded into it, we may not confine our good opinion and offices of kindness to those of our own sect and persuasion ; but may embrace all men with the most hearty approbation and good will, as equally thy children, dear to thee, with ourselves ; and equally in thy favour, whilst seeking sincerely to please thee ; and may thus rejoice in them, and in all the good that they receive or do.

In requiring this temper and disposition to be in us, which is in thyself, thou givest us a pleasing idea and foretaste of the happiness which thou hast reserved for us beyond the grave; and fittest and trainest us up for the enjoyment of it; when the happiness of all will become our own, by our loving them and taking pleasure therein; and will be as boundless as that universal community of rational and virtuous beings, with whose blissful state and characters we hope hereafter to become acquainted.

This, O God, is that blessed state to which we aspire; *when charity shall have its perfect work*: for which thou didst send us a divine teacher and Saviour, Jesus, to prepare and to bring us to it. For him we bless thee; and through him, according to thy appointment, we desire to offer up unto thee all praise, adoration and thanksgiving, now and for ever.

A

SUMMARY ACCOUNT

OF THE

REFORMED LITURGY

Now used at the CHAPEL in ESSEX-HOUSE,
Essex-Street, Strand, London.

WHEN the design of a more scriptural form of worship was first proposed to be put in practice, upon the plan of the late *Dr. Samuel Clarke*, some friends advised to print the liturgy of the church of England, with his emendations, and to make use of it, exactly as he had *left* it. The same has been since much recommended by others. And it were to have been wished that this *Reformed Liturgy* might have come out quite sheltered under the name of that great man, and called intirely his.

But it would have been an injury to his memory, to have proposed that for a just model of public worship under his sanction, which

which he was very far from intending to be such.

His principal attention and care seem to have been employed in rectifying the great errors concerning the *object* of religious worship, which obtained in the national church, of which he was member, and one of its greatest ornaments. In doing this, he nobly ventured to follow the leading of holy scripture, however contrary to the received doctrines; and *blotted out or changed such prayers and invocations as were addressed to Christ, or the holy spirit, and not to the One God, the Father.*

In his examination of the book of common prayer, as he passed along, he also noted and changed many of the sentiments and expressions, which he judged improper or wrong.

But it fell not within his purpose, to remark or censure such obvious imperfections of that book, which had been pointed out before by others, and could hardly escape the observation of any one, whenever it should come under a general review: I mean, the very frequent return of the Lord's prayer, and of the like requests in other prayers; the repetition of two creeds, within a short space one after another; the confusion * occasioned by what were at first three distinct services, and repeated at different hours, being thrown

* The Morning Prayer was at first read at six in the morning: the Communion Service at nine, or soon after; and a little before that, the litany.

all together, and blended into one * : From which it happens, that at the end of one part, we are dismissed with a concluding prayer, and solemn blessing, and immediately after begin the circle of our devotions again : Faults these not of our ever honoured Reformers ; but of us, their less careful and indolent successors. These blemishes therefore, were of necessity to be removed.

Some passages retained by *Dr. Clarke*, have been omitted * ; and some farther alterations and additions have been made : all which are submitted to the judgment of the serious and diligent reader of holy scripture. In the devotional part, wherever any change has been made, care has been taken not to lose that simplicity of sentiment, and easy flow of pious and natural eloquence, for which many parts of our antient liturgy are justly admired.

The occasional prayers and thanksgivings have been for the present omitted. Perhaps it may not be amiss always to reserve to the officiating Minister the liberty of introducing suitable prayers of his own composing on such emergencies as can with difficulty be provided for beforehand.

The observation of *Christmas day*, *Good Friday*, *Easter day*, the *Ascension*, and *Whit-*

* Thus, for example, the *Obsecrations*, as they are called, in the litany, are left out : *By thy holy incarnation*, &c. although *Dr. Clarke* changes them to be an address to God, and not to Christ.

sunday ; still kept up, as being memorials of the principal facts concerning our Saviour Christ, and the establishment of his religion in the world. The *Saints days*, as they are called, are fallen into almost universal neglect, and serve chiefly for civil purposes ; save that now and then they help to bring back a Protestant to the bosom of Popery, by their too near affinity to that mother of superstition and idolatries. They are therefore intirely left out.

The appointment of the litany to be read only on such days as the Lord's Supper is administred, corresponds with the order of the original Compilers of the liturgy. For our ecclesiastical history informs us, that the litany was designed to be a kind of preparation to the Communion, and to be read a little before that office began.

The morning service, on the days that the Lord's Supper is administered, is somewhat shorter than at other times ; and the introductory part of the Communion Service is laid aside as unnecessary ; by which the whole is much abridged. And it is hoped, that all that join in the former, will attend the latter. For it is in itself most unreasonable, and, wholly unprecedented in the Apostles times, that any should join in the devotions of the church and not join in receiving the Lord's supper, a part of those devotions ; but not more sacred than the rest, nor requiring any different religious disposition of mind or preparation for it.

Dr. Clarke made many alterations in the Baptismal office, which was much incumbered with a continual reference to the abstruse metaphysical doctrines of *election and original sin*. But he does not appear to have sufficiently disentangled it. A strict adherence to holy scripture, and the simplicity of the institution, has been aimed at in the additional parts of this service.

The promiscuous reading of the Psalms having been long matter of complaint; the appointment of these, and of the lessons, seems properly left to the discretion of the Minister.

A collection of such psalms and hymns as may be fittest to be sung by the congregation, will be hereafter drawn up and printed. In the mean time, the Psalms of *Dr. Watts* will be made use of; whose devotional compositions were many years ago justly praised and commended by the authors of the *Candid Disquisitions*.

F I N I S.

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